

# THE RIGHT TRACK

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Mon cher Dandurand,

J'ai lu votre réponse au Père  
Lelande; j'avais également lu la dissertation de  
ce dernier. Vous êtes dans la bonne voie, et vous  
avez la note juste.

"It may be a long chase, but it  
will come out all right."

Croyez-moi toujours

Votre tout dévoué,

*Wilfrid Laurier*

L'honorable Raoul Dandurand  
548, rue Sherbrooke, Ouest,  
Montréal. P.Q.

*Reduced fac-simile of letter from the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier  
to  
Senator Dandurand  
Written at the House of Commons, Ottawa, and dated Feb. 6th., 1919*

*This letter shows that Sir Wilfrid Laurier had come  
to see that compulsory education in the Province of  
Quebec was a necessary part in practical politics.*

# THE RIGHT TRACK

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN THE  
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

BY

*The Late* I. O. VINCENT

PRINCIPAL KING EDWARD SCHOOL, MONTREAL

INTRODUCTION BY

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TORONTO

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## PREFACE.

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In his election campaign last autumn, after his appointment as Provincial Secretary, Hon. L. A. David invited the people of Quebec to discuss the problem of education, and gave a new incentive to the discussion by outlining his own ideals. This lead was too inviting to be ignored ; it has called forth this historical sketch of the attempt to secure an attendance law in Quebec.

I wish to take this opportunity of congratulating the Provincial Secretary on so definitely setting himself a high ideal for an educational policy. Political leaders in all countries have often been so intent on gazing at the individual trees and stumps of educational policy at close range that they have not seen the forest, nor have they been able to get a panoramic view of the problem as a whole. Hon. Mr. David is not afraid of his ideals nor of expressing them in public. When he tells the French-Canadian people of this province that they form a minority in the Dominion, and that they must therefore strive for an educational development that will give them intellectual supremacy, he has a message for the English speaking minority within the province as well. And he admits at once the existence of educational competition—a message which enthusiasts

in the recent campaign for an attendance law have been preaching on all occasions. It is just because the Provincial Secretary is a professed idealist that I have made bold to take up his challenge by writing this little book to summarize the progress made towards securing an attendance law, and to explain to English readers just what opposition has to be met and what fears have to be proved groundless before such an enactment can be put on the statute book.

I trust that no one will imagine that the purpose of this book is to criticize unduly the educational system of the province of Quebec. The people of this province are justly proud of our dual system, which suits the local requirements and works without friction, giving each section educational autonomy. The people of Quebec realize too that during the regime of Sir Lomer Gouin an extensive educational policy has been pursued, which reached its culminating point in the idealistic tone recently infused into it by Hon. Mr. David. Much of this steady progress has been along the line of improved administration and of providing better school facilities. But there is another road of educational improvement, the legislative road.

The small amount of legislation to improve education that has been put on our statute books in the past decade, as compared with

other states, must give us cause to think. If our present educational facilities are to be used to the full, the pathway to the temple of learning must not be a narrow one up rough and difficult heights that can be scaled only by those who have the will to find a way or make it ; that path must be broadened out by legislation into a mighty highway, open to all. At the top of the path stand Knowledge and Possibility, beckoning the oncoming student. But, alas, the vision of the student is often weak ; he is easily enticed from the way by some trivial allurements, or else receives no proper encouragement. To such a one the way seems very long and steep as he looks upwards from the foot of the slope. Some restraining power is urgently needed to keep children from wandering off the true path. The one efficacious fence that does prevent them from leaving the road, except at the regular stopping places, is an attendance law, which is not so much a measure of coercion as a means of meeting the counter coercion of untoward circumstances. Where such a law is in force, conscientious parents are hardly aware of its workings, just because it is meant, not to restrain them, but to assist them in fulfilling the moral obligation of giving their children an adequate education.

One who writes contemporary history of contentious politics is undertaking a hazardous venture. It has generally been considered

wise to wait until the protagonists of a movement are all dead before making an attempt to trace its history. Such discretion makes the position of the historian less subject to partisan criticism. But there are times when discretion is not the better part of wisdom. When a great cause is at stake, it is often necessary to sum up the progress made as an earnest of coming victory and as a means of encouraging the workers. The conditions of success, too, are often to be discovered in a study of the unsuccessful attempts of early leaders. While I am certain that these considerations amply justify the attempt to write such a historical sketch for English readers, I am deeply conscious of the shortcomings of my effort. From reactionary partisans I am sure to receive nothing but bitter criticism ; from those whose efforts I have inadvertently slighted by omission (and there may be several such), I expect deserved criticism, and from those whom I have criticized for what I conceive to be errors of judgment, I solicit a kindly criticism. But the cause is greater than any of its leaders and will surely live down both criticism and errors.

To all who have helped me in this way I wish to give my thanks. Many have assisted with information ; several friends have given ungrudgingly of their time. I must particularly thank Professor Dale for writing the

introduction and for other invaluable assistance ; without his generous help and the imprimatur of his Introduction, the work would hardly have been possible. For all errors I hold myself responsible. The expressions of opinion and the judgments of men and movements are my own. I trust no one will hold my friends responsible for what are my personal views.

IRVING O. VINCENT.

JAN., 1920.





## INTRODUCTION

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What is the best we can do for our children ? This is the question we are all asking in our own homes. In most modern societies the question is partly answered by the existence of schools. The ideal towards which these schools are aiming (more or less consciously and with varying success), is the guidance of childhood into manhood and womanhood, through a community of life which fosters the healthy growth of mind and body and character. This is what we seek for our own children.

It takes very little experience of life to know that the advantages we seek are not always enjoyed by all the children in the community, and that not only the children but the community are losers thereby. The conviction has become almost universal that this should not be. The personal ideal has expanded into the social, and demands at least the opportunity of education for every child however unfortunate. This demand, expressed in legislation, is known as compulsory education, or compulsory school attendance. Thus the typical modern state provides not only the opportunities for education (in varying degrees), but also protection for the children of school age ; so that not one of them shall be prevented by the ignorance or

poverty or selfishness of anyone, from taking advantage of such opportunities as are offered for his betterment. The state, which is the mass of parents and guardians, thus takes the same view of the welfare of all its children as the devoted parent does of the welfare of his own.

Some people dislike or fear the idea of compulsion. It is unfortunate that under this harsh term education presents its least attractive side. In truth, compulsory education is a children's charter of liberty. It gives at least a minimum of insurance against neglect and exploitation. It gives freedom to develop under the best available influences ; freedom to escape the handicaps of ignorance and poverty ; freedom to make a better preparation for the work and play of life. This will become increasingly clearer as schools themselves develop, and grow more attractive and useful, more convincingly responsive to the demands of child life, and productive of good, happy and prosperous citizenship. There is little need to fear compulsion in this matter. All wise legislation contains ample provision for cases of hardship, and there is no reason why, with so much experience to draw upon, ours should not be of the wisest. Essentially compulsion comes as the last sanction of a measure whose only prohibition is against injurious abuse, and whose positive aim is solely the opening

up of possibilities for a healthier growth into a richer and fuller life, already enjoyed by the fortunate.

That is the kind of compulsion—the force to clear away obstacles to freer development, personal and national—which we need in the province of Quebec. We do not need to follow slavishly what has been done elsewhere, but to work out a system best suited to our own conditions. Our institutions have grown out of our past, along lines indicated by our history, actuated by the spirit of our own people, working for the welfare of a community in many respects unique.

We need to work out the common principles of educational justice in terms of our own circumstances. One of the chief difficulties in the way of agreement has been the tendency to argue from cases not really analogous. This is specially noticeable in the case of the parallel with revolutionary France, which Mr. Vincent's book effectively exposes. It is the part of wisdom to study our own circumstances, and to mould our institutions in line with our traditions, yet at the same time in tune with the advancing ideals of a changing world.

If we do this we shall have many gains. We shall at once be rid of the false idea of uniformity, and be well started on the "right track" to a common ground of co-operation with those who differ from us. French-Canadians and

English-Canadians are each the heirs of a culture which is organic and vital to them. Neither can accept that of its neighbour for the asking, and of course neither will yield to force. Each can develop its own according to its own genius, while increasing knowledge will show that each has much to learn from the other. As this book will appeal especially to English-speaking readers, I will confess that there is much in the finished product of French-speaking education that I would be glad to see in our own.

But we have one fault in common which we can join hands to cure, the early desertion of our schools. A candid study of the statistics of school attendance proves beyond a doubt, that the great majority of our scholars leave school too early, and that many of our children do not attend school at all. With this fact before us, it is the merest self-deception to say that we are doing what we publicly confess to be the best for children.

Very little study reveals to us that any system of education is only one of the products of the total social, economic, and political forces which mould the community, and in which the community expresses itself. To students of education this sounds a mere truism, but it is also a startling and far-reaching discovery which every educational authority will have to make for itself in course of time—a disquieting discovery, but one



which will give them the clue to the solution of their problems. Let no one think that our present system, even if made universal, would be perfect. If so it would be unique among human institutions. But it would become firm ground for advance, and each section could develop as progressively as possible under its own limitations and those imposed by the necessity of working together in a dual community.

Our civilization has achieved much to be proud of, marred by much that is a shame and a menace. In the sphere of education I need only point to the sad figures of our infantile mortality, and the heavy wastage of our school population. The burden is aggravated by the presence of a large heterogeneous mass of foreign immigrants, seeking our citizenship, often at the pressing invitation of our agents and advertisements. For many of their children our denominational education finds no place ; we have as a community given little thought to their welfare in the promised land, nor to the inevitable effects of our neglect. The lost lives of these little ones, the wasted precious days of our absentee school children, the lost opportunities of a real and true nationalization of alien immigrants, the unbridged gap between school and life of so many who go unprepared into citizenship—these constitute just as truly a waste as that from which arise the by-

products of industry, a waste to be redeemed in the same way by knowledge and scientific treatment, though in terms of human material. For what is waste but a name for that for which we have not discovered a use, or which we have failed to put to use ?

Nor can we satisfy ourselves with the plea "genius will out." This is often true, and a just source of pride in indomitable character and talent. But no one can count the amount of repressed or undeveloped talent, nor begin to calculate the sum of its loss.

No ! in our education, as in our industry, in the development of our human as of our material resources, the only line of real progress is from the individualistic to the co-operative, from the empirical to the scientific. The problem is to retain the old pioneering initiative but to turn it to the common good, and to enlist in that great service all the capacity that has failed to find its outlet, and so failed to make its contribution. We may disagree about the remedies for social ills not less urgent. But here French and English, Catholic and Protestant, capitalist and wage-earner, can all agree, however much they may differ in educational ideals and practice. The first step is to know the facts of the case, and to know each other's case.

In opening up the benefits of education to all our children we shall have to meet many

practical questions not to be considered here. The first requisite, and one of the chief advantages of universal education, is a school census—a complete list of all the children of school age. This is the basis for the estimate of cost, capital and current. It must be borne in mind that the census will provide a significant index of the returns upon the investment of public money under the present system.

But the cost is not the chief obstacle. It has been overcome in many nations which have had to provide more schools than we shall need. And after all, we shall not wish to put up the plea of poverty. When the investment is widely enough realized, the financing will be easy. As in the finance of war, where there's a will there's a way. We have only to realize that the production of good citizens is the greatest and most vital of all our national industries.

The chief difficulty lies in our racial and religious divisions. Its solution lies in sympathetic and tolerant understanding. The necessary co-operation can only be based on respect for our differences : we must make it clear that this movement has no thought of attack on the legal rights of our fellow citizens, and no offence against their religious faith, with whatever force of conviction we may prefer our own.

\* \* \* \* \*

The MS. of this book was ready for the press, except for the final revision, when its author passed away, on February 23rd, after a very short illness. His memory is secure in the hearts of his many friends and pupils. But this book will take its place as a contribution to the history of education and of Canada—a worthy monument of the ardent spirit of a true patriot. I recall with sorrow that he was only at the threshold of a career for which he had faithfully prepared himself, and that this would have been followed by other studies devoted to the welfare of the children whose needs he so well understood and so deeply felt.

Irving Orrin Vincent was born in 1885 at St. Armand, near Frelighsburg, Que., and began his schooling there at the model school. He passed through Stanstead Academy to McGill, where he graduated with 1st Rank Honours in Classics in 1907, taking his M.A. in Classics the following year. He taught first at Sherbrooke, then at Cookshire, till 1912, when he was appointed first principal of the new King Edward VII. School in Montreal. The care of this large school did not exhaust his energies. He turned a keen and maturing mind not only to the problems of his own profession, but to the whole social environment of the citizens of to-morrow. These were the two main channels of his public activity, in the Protestant Teachers'

Association (of which he was Vice-President), and in the campaign for compulsory school attendance. He worked hard to improve the status of the teacher in every way, and took great interest in the progress of the profession in other countries. He was one of the group of teachers who gave the profession in the province of Quebec their first official organ, *The Teachers' Magazine*, a notable contribution to their solidarity.

It is not too much to say that his work for compulsory education put a new face on that controversy. As chairman of a committee of the Protestant Teachers' Association, he carried out with characteristic thoroughness (aided by Mr. W. C. R. Anderson and Mrs. Irwin) a systematic study of the statistics of school attendance, which had never been done before. This led to further research into the early history of the movement. Only his friends know the labour of collecting material which has gone into this book. He went to the documents for everything, like the good student he was; and in his treatment of them, combined historical justice and balance with a passionate zeal for the cause which for him was a veritable crusade. He quotes the arguments of his opponents in their own words, and even in the heat of debate is scrupulously fair, because behind the controversy lay a devotion to truth, a wise

tolerance, a generous enthusiasm, and a sanguine desire to convince.

It is one friend's pleasure to make his own the tribute of another, from an appreciation by Mrs. Hammond Irwin in the McGill Daily :

"To all these multifarious investigations and activities, Mr. Vincent brought a sound classical and professional training, with a clear grasp of detail, a sureness of judgment and capacity for work, that make his loss incalculable ; the more so that he was possessed also of certain less definable qualities which reformers so often lack ; a quiet modesty of bearing and charm of manner, which played no small part in the success of his undertakings, and endeared him to all who had the privilege of working with him. And in the midst of the engrossing interests which have been outlined here, and the onerous duties of his professional life, Mr. Vincent still found time for study. He felt that there was great danger of allowing the intellectual side to be overshadowed ; and so, from time to time, he returned to his student life, and spent part of several vacations, quite recently, in pursuing his classical studies at the University of Chicago.

"It is impossible to realize yet what a loss the city and the Province have sustained ; but if his confreres carry on and bring to a successful issue the various educational reforms which his personality and devotion inspired, his life will not have been lived in vain."

March, 1920

J. A. DALE



## CHAPTER I.

### THE MISSIONARY STAGE — MERCIER — THE CAUSE OF OPPOSITION.

The demand for compulsory education does not arise in the early stages of the educational history of any country. In Quebec, as elsewhere, there was for long years no public school system, and education was left to private initiative and the Church ; the Government did not assist even with a money grant until well on into the nineteenth century. For nearly half a century, after the Act of 1846, the crying need was for schools and teachers. At the same time the Governments of the day were slowly working out the administrative ground-work. During the last generation the problem of school finance has been taken in hand ; twenty years ago the teachers of Quebec were probably the worst paid teachers in North America. The Government has in recent years been able to assist in attacking this problem by increasing its grants, and it surely must see that this is the open sesame to all future educational progress. Under these conditions the problem of education for all the children up to 14 years of age was not likely to become an active question demanding legislation.

The principle of compulsory education has never been a question of party politics in

Quebec, and it is to be hoped that it never will. There is absolutely no reason why such a law, based on the present dual system, should not win universal approval in Quebec, if handled properly. The two parties in the past have differed on certain educational policies. For example, in the eighties the Liberal party, under the lead of Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière and Honoré Mercier, over and over again challenged the Conservative Governments of the day on the inefficiency of school inspection. The two parties have also differed on the question whether the Council of Public Instruction or the Legislature should have supremacy in the control of education. The Government of Hon. C. Boucher de Boucherville in 1875 made the Council supreme ; in 1897-8 the Marchand Government tried to reverse the balance of power by bringing education again under the control of a Minister of Education. But among the early supporters of a compulsory law we find Mercier and Senator Dandurand on the Liberal side, and Judge Hackett on the Conservative; while to-day the supporters of the movement are drawn from all parties. While there may be temporary opposition in certain quarters, it is to be hoped that the two parties will not split over this issue of giving equal chances for an education to all the children. The success of the measure will depend much on the absence of organized partisan opposi-



tion, which would cause a serious cleavage in public opinion. If Quebec is to make progress in education at all comparable to her needs, and up to the standard of adjoining provinces and states, education must be above the domain of partisan disputes.

Long before it became a question of pressing moment there were found men of vision who gave their earnest support to the principle. One of the first and most important of these early reformers was Honoré Mercier, whose name should long be remembered in connection with education. In his day the advantages of public instruction were not as well understood as to-day. There were many who did not consider education a necessity, particularly for the farmers; and there were a few who, like Dickens' John Willet, openly said it was a menace to the contentment of the people, and prided themselves on their old-fashioned views. Mercier and his band of devoted followers protested vigorously against this mentality of stagnation, as did Laurier when a member of the Quebec Legislature. Mercier preached educational reforms on every platform, particularly education for the workers. It was largely because of his persistent missionary work that at the Liberal Convention of March 29th, 1881, the establishment by the Government of Schools of Arts and Trades (Night Schools) was made a plank of the Liberal

platform. At this Convention Mercier said, "The Liberal Party has a grand and noble mission to accomplish in this country, to instruct the people for the purpose of making them better and free. The light of instruction will cause fanaticism and prejudice to disappear ; and in a country like ours where the electorate is called upon to decide such grave questions, it is necessary to devise a vast system of primary instruction, at the disposal of all and for the profit of all. That day when the Canadian elector knows how to read and write, will see him independent, free and unprejudiced." Probably his expectation that the same day would see the Canadian elector a Liberal did not impress the Conservative Government favorably. But they did go so far as give a small subsidy to a school of arts and trades in Quebec city in the following June. Mercier took advantage of that vote to tell the House his ideals on education, in a notable speech to be dealt with later.

Mercier had been an advocate of the compulsory principle since 1872. On April 21st, 1876, he made an important pronouncement in Montreal before the Club National : "The state can and ought to intervene to see that this obligation is fulfilled. I believe I have shown the existence of the obligation, and the power of the state to have it executed. It would be strange, as a matter of fact, to

claim that the state can force a father to nourish his child, and that it could not force him to have the child taught. The only question for us in the present condition of our school law is, not whether society can pass regulations to punish negligent parents, but whether it ought not to go further and punish by a fine, or by the privation of their political rights, those who without excuse neglect to give their children the benefits of an elementary education. The Revolution of 1789, which did so many good things that the horrors of '93 could not erase them from memory, thought it necessary, in order to lift man from the degradation into which a tyranny eleven times more secular had plunged him, to open wide to him the doors of the temple of instruction ; it even went so far in carrying this out as to oblige the fathers and mothers to send their children to the elementary schools. A fine was imposed on those who neglected to have their children enrolled on the school register ; old offenders were punished by the deprivation of their civic rights for ten years. The same penalty was imposed on young people who at twenty years of age had not learned a science, an art or a trade useful to society. A distinguished writer (Emile de Girardin, a moderate French Conservative, and a friend of the Duc de Broglie) believes the best way to compel the parents to have their children taught

would be to deprive of their political rights all those who at twenty years of age could neither read nor write. However, it seems more rational to accompany that with a penalty against the fathers who from that time on, did not fulfil the conditions of the law. In this manner we should reach the really guilty, for to punish the son is to convict him of a fault in which he has no share ; but to strike at both father and son would be to arrest their attention and stimulate their zeal, with respect to an obligation which they have an equal and reciprocal interest in fulfilling. I would have liked to speak of the reforms needed in our system of education; and of the measures which should be adopted to render it more practical, and therefore more profitable, to oblige the parents to send their children to the elementary schools; to examine with you whether the time has not arrived, or will not soon come when it will be necessary to punish the guardian of a child who shows himself indifferent to its instruction."

Mercier did not mince words. His reference to the French Revolution must have caused no little stir among staid and timid minds. His really great effort on behalf of compulsory education was made in the Assembly on June 17th, 1881, when he was deputy for St. Hyacinthe. The occasion he used was during the supplementary credits. The Christian Brothers had asked for a

grant of \$7,000 to help them in establishing a school of arts and trades in Quebec like the one that existed in Montreal. The Government was prepared to give \$1,000. Chapleau moved this credit and Mercier was ready with his speech in his pocket ; such a splendid effort is not made without serious preparation. The whole speech is worthy of being quoted ; we can give only a few passages ; but it can be read in the debates of the Assembly as well as in his biography by Pelland. It is interesting to note that *La Minerve*, the Conservative organ in Montreal, completely ignored this speech. And what Chapleau thought of it is not recorded. At any rate the credit was hurriedly voted without further comment after Mercier sat down. He had taken the wind out of the sails of the ship of state. It would have required a Demosthenes or a Cicero to have continued the debate after so forceful a speech.

He began by complimenting the members of the Government on the proposition, modest as it was, and said he was glad for once to be able to agree with them. Then he went on to tell what his ideals were for the people of his province. "The cause of education is the great popular cause ; it is the cause of our political institutions ; it is the national cause par excellence. I never examine it without feeling myself almost moved to tears to see so few efforts made for the triumph

of so great a cause. . . . . Our aspirations have outrun our strength. We wished to have political institutions before we were in a position to appreciate all their significance and to make them function properly. We wished to be free before we were capable of knowing the full price of liberty. Our fathers struggled valiantly and gave us a pure and generous blood to conquer our rights, and we sometimes sacrifice these rights with a culpable levity and a criminal indifference. And these defections, these errors, this levity and this indifference, which every intelligent citizen sees and which every sincere friend of the country regrets, come from the insufficient education of the electoral body. The best institutions, when the education of a people is not deep enough to develop the seed, are only elements of perturbation in society, as they create needs which can not be satisfied ; they squander rights and duties, they enfeeble governments, which because of a multiplication of laws, put themselves in a position where they can not apply. They bring about an excessive concentration in the few minds keen enough to take them up, of ideas which should be insensibly absorbed by an entire population. These ideas ferment, they explode to no purpose. It is in this way that institutions, which produce more strength than they can usefully employ, perish by exceeding what they ought to keep



down. This is the danger to which every Government is exposed whose first thought is not to put education in harmony with the constitution of the people. . . . The education of a people puts absolute governments in danger ; on the contrary, ignorance puts representative institutions in peril ; the masses do not wait for parliamentary debate to reveal to them the extent of their rights till they can exercise them with discernment. And when a people knows its rights, there is only one way of governing them, that is, by instructing them. Every government founded on the double principle of equality of civil rights and election, will always be anarchical and tottering, if a proper system of education does not regenerate public opinion. . . . As Emile de Girardin says, experience shows that when elementary education is the privilege of some and not the obligation of all, it only makes victims. And I will add, it only makes the evil worse by increasing the power of occult influences and evil tendencies. Ignorance kills liberty ; instruction gives it life and kills superstition. . . . To spread public instruction, to make it penetrate into the remotest corners of the country, to conquer the resistance or indifference of parents, to proclaim compulsory attendance at school under certain conditions, that is the first duty of our legislators. . . . I have just pronounced terrible and

very dangerous words, the obligation of having the children educated. The thesis which I maintain is not new ; it has not always been impious, but is only so when maintained by a Liberal." Pressing home his point, Mercier made striking use of quotations from M. Oscar Dunn, a Conservative who was at that time French Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction. Dunn, writing in *La Minerve* in 1873, had stated that every democratic society has to face the problem of compulsory education some day ; and strongly approved the proposal of the French publicist Prévost-Paradol to revise the Election Act by providing unprinted ballots on which the elector should write the name of the candidate for whom he wished to vote ! Dunn's question is worth quoting here ; its use by Mercier made some sensation in the House. "You have seen the best people divided on the question whether one could or not, in the interest of the public, impose on all the citizens an elementary education. But this is a point on which all people are in accord, that it is lawful and useful to encourage in every way the citizens to acquire this elementary instruction. Now do you know, sir, of more efficacious means, or more legitimate ones to excite a salutary emulation, than this alternative offered to all, to be or not to be an elector, according as one can or can not write his



name on his ballot paper ?” In closing this remarkable speech, which has been the inspiration and the despair of so many friends of compulsory education in more recent days, Mercier used his favourite peroration, “Pour instruction on the heads of the people; you are in duty bound to give them this baptism.”

Mercier was the missionary of the cause of compulsory education in Quebec. In his day only a few countries in the world were using compulsion, and several different experiments had been tried out in these laws. He met with a considerable difficulty which does not exist to-day, when such laws are so common and so stereotyped in form, that nearly everyone knows something about them. Everyone who has travelled has seen them being worked out elsewhere, or at least has heard of their workings. But Mercier went out to preach a new and strange gospel ; he had to explain all the details and origin of his faith as well as to exhort his hearers to share it. It was easy for his opponents to persuade the people that “le bon vieux temps” was good enough. Besides in that day Liberalism had the difficult task of living down the dark suspicion fostered by its opponents, that it meant revolutionary radicalism or Jacobinism. It will be to the everlasting glory of Mercier, that he in the Provincial field, as Laurier in the Federal,

broke the invidious spell of this prejudicial name in the province of Quebec.

But before we go further, we must explain the main reasons why compulsory education has been opposed, or else the ideas of reformers will not be intelligible, nor shall we be conscious as we go along of the very real progress we are witnessing. There are two chief reasons why compulsory education has been suspect in the province of Quebec. In the first place it is feared as an extension of the rights of the state over education. We will take this point of view in its extremest and most ingenuous form, without either condemning it or implying that any person or party of persons accepts it in its entirety to-day. Those who hold this view say that it is not the mission of the state to teach, but to encourage education and to supply the funds. They are interested in keeping education out of politics for this same reason, and have been ready to denounce anyone who proposed to discuss educational reform on the hustings. They praise the organization of the Council of Public Instruction, which is practically supreme in the administration of education and free from all interference by revolutionary deputies. They are particularly anxious that deputies should have no control over text-books ; for whoever controls the text books will control the doctrines taught and the resulting ideas. They oppose

uniformity of text books, because it gives the state more control in a matter which is the sole prerogative of the parents. The parent should control the education of his child ; for the sake of convenience parents band themselves together and form school boards, to which the state gives certain powers, principally the power to raise taxes. It has even opposed compulsory taxation for school purposes. The teachers are directly responsible to the parents, not to the state. To this type of mind free text books are objectionable, as they appear to be an invasion of the rights of the parents, that is to say, of local boards, to choose their books ; for free education would certainly bring with it uniformity. Even night schools were opposed for a time by some extremists because they were free schools. This type of thought would not see a strong central control, and it has in recent times objected on this ground to the appointment of the inspectors being in the hands of the Government, instead of in that of the Council of Public Instruction. Compulsory education is most heinous of all, as being a direct attack on the primordial and inalienable right of the parent to control the education of his child and to bring him up in ignorance, if he wishes. Such a theory ignores many obvious facts and has had to give way over and over again. Its grounds are much the same as those on which the

control of the schools by the Government was opposed by some of the Protestant churches in England in the beginning of last century. It displays a distrust in itself ; it seems afraid to trust itself to the wishes of the people. To perpetuate itself and to protect itself from change, it keeps on repeating that the state, which is merely the parents en masse, has no rights in education.

If these ideas were carried into law in their extremest form, our school system would be a chain of straw. The local boards would be practically supreme ; they could keep their schools open for four months only if they wished ; they could starve education by keeping down taxes ; they could use obsolete text books and could hire unqualified teachers. But this theory has had to give way steadily from the very first ; in 1846 it had to grant compulsory taxation ; later on the choice of text books was limited by the Council, and the movement to-day is certainly towards uniformity. The rights of local boards as regards finance are sharply defined, and teachers' rights are being made more and more definite. Many of these changes were brought about by mutual consent ; some were imposed by the Legislature. Such a theory of school control would allow the inefficient or indifferent board to do as little as it wished. Compulsion has had to be used in the past and is provided for in the present

law against such a board ; without it there would have been in a few cases at least a *reductio ad absurdum* of all improvement. But this theory, consisting largely of survivals from antiquity, never had vitality enough in itself to cause the great and prolonged prejudice that has existed in Quebec.

The other reason is the trend of recent legislation in France. In Mercier's early days this ground of opposition did not exist ; but as soon as it did appear, it caused a retardation of the movement for more than one whole generation. English readers must weigh these words carefully and try to sympathize with the fears caused by this example, if they are ever to appreciate the attitude of the French Canadians. If this insight is gained, it will be a safeguard against many a pitfall that has caught unwary travellers along the road of educational reform.

The father of compulsory education in modern France is undoubtedly Jean Francois Macé, a deist and for long years a teacher in a girls' school at Monthiers, a few miles from Chateau Thierry. He conceived the importance of compulsion as early as 1848 ; he tells how he was affected when he saw the proclamation of universal suffrage on the walls of Paris during the Revolution of that year. He felt a mixture, he says, of foolish joy and secret terror. He foresaw the first and early consequences of that heroic impru-

dence, as he expresses it ; he expected it would be followed shortly by a dictatorship, and that the Empire would become consecrated and legitimate by the suffrages of the sovereign people. He believed that universal education should be the precursor of universal suffrage. Mercier held that the process would in the natural course of events be reversed, and a democratic form of government bring after it universal education as a vital condition to its stability. In 1866 Macé founded La Ligue d'Enseignement ; in a few years it had developed its threefold demand for compulsory, free and lay or unsectarian education. Macé's views on religious teaching were expressed in the words : "Science in the schools, religion in the churches." Such a view is the veriest contrary of the view of devout Catholics that religion is the basis of all instruction, and that it is impossible to separate it from the rest of educational training, as it should permeate and vitalize the whole. The ideas of the League gained favour among the republicans of France, and in 1881 received the official sanction by a "declaration of public utility." The Republican Government, in the law of Feb. 27th, 1880, had regulated university degrees ; clause seven of this Bill had taken away from unauthorized religious orders the right to teach. This Bill was the work of Jules Ferry, as Minister of Public Instruction. It aroused



violent controversy and was rejected in the Senate ; later on the Government carried out the provisions of this bill by means of a decree proscribing unauthorized congregations. The law of June 16th, 1881, made education free and secularized the course of study ; religious instruction was abolished and the study of civics and morals took its place. This law carried out the principles of the Republican Left, that the State is a lay State. This law is the real crux of the opposition of devout Catholics in France. The opposition was increased the next year when Ferry carried the compulsory law on March 28th, 1882. While he did throw a sop to his opponents by allowing a child to be educated at home or in a private school, this concession was of little real value ; the public schools were secular, and the religious congregations had had their liberty curtailed by being obliged to seek authorization, while it was the evident intention of the Government to go farther and make the congregations give up the teaching function. So after all this concession was of no practical value to those who wished to have their children educated in confessional schools, but could not pay for a private tutor. The law of October 30th, 1886, secularized the teaching body by providing that after a certain date the public schools should no longer be entrusted to clerical teachers. Macé was a member of

the Senate when this bill was passed, and he disappointed some of his friends by opposing one clause ; he made a plea for more time before the communes should be obliged to accept lay teachers. He demanded that the Government should not bind its hands by a legal and imperative declaration ; he was afraid the policy of the Government was premature and would do much to harm the schools by arousing opposition in certain communes that still desired congregational schools. But his voice was not listened to, and he has been accused by his biographer Compayré of timidity and excessive prudence on that occasion. The law of July 7th, 1904, disqualified all congregations from teaching in any establishment. These different laws were fought strenuously by a strong minority led by men such as Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, Count de Mun, Count de Broglie, Louis Veuillot and many others, who took as their claim, "The Liberty of Teaching."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier realized that the influence of French politics played into the hands of the reactionaries in Quebec, and often blocked the pathway of Liberal legislation. For instance, in his address on Liberalism of June 26th, 1877 in Quebec City, he said : "I accuse them of judging the political situation of our country, not according to the situation which exists here, but according to the situation that exists in France. I accuse



them of wishing to introduce here ideas that are impossible of application in our state of society."

There can be no doubt whatever that the trend of school legislation in Republican France has exercised a deep impression on the minds of Catholics in Quebec. The profession of faith of members of the French League has been taken as evidence that free, compulsory and lay education are indissolubly bound up together. This impression has been heightened by some ultra-Radicals here who have demanded unsectarian education at the same time they demanded a compulsory law. The belief that if the one is granted the others are sure to follow, has been often stated and the frequent repetition has gained it considerable credence. This fact will explain the opposition of some who do not hold the castor view. One incident, unimportant in itself, will serve to show the extent of this fear of what happened in France. A few years ago a Ligue d'Enseignement was formed in Montreal and received the support of many prominent citizens; but when it was learned that some of its officials had been in communication with the French society, the Montreal body at once broke up. However, recent legislation in Quebec itself has had the effect of dividing the substance of this triad of French Republicanism; little by little the logic of events has

shown that these three principles are not bound together in any mystic unity. Free night schools did not lead to a revolution. In 1903 a bill was presented at Quebec to give school boards the right to abolish fees ; it was supported by only five or six deputies. Yet a few years later, when the Protestant School Board of Montreal asked for power to abolish fees, the privilege was granted. In 1912 any board was given the right to abolish fees. This bill passed unanimously through both chambers, and was the object of deserved praise from M. Tellier, the leader of the Opposition. School boards that have abolished fees, such as the two boards of Montreal, have found no trace of Jacobinism in a law which is meant to give the child of the poorest worker a chance to attend school as well as the child of the rich man.

## CHAPTER II.

### OTHER EARLY DISCIPLES—MARTINEAU AND DANDURAND—THE DE GROSBOIS BILL.

There were two young Liberals in the eighties, even then marked out as destined to become well known in politics and law, who learned to espouse the cause of compulsory education at the feet of Honoré Mercier. One of these was Paul G. Martineau, now a Judge and a member of the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction. He wrote as follows in the newspaper "Le Reveil" for October 28th, 1876 : "At any price it is necessary to shake up the apathy manifested for the schools. It is necessary to make the 'habitants' of the country understand what an advantage it is for a farmer to possess the information to follow the progress which is taking place every day in his art. For that purpose a rigorous law ought to be passed, compelling all parents, under pain of penalty, to send their children to the public school, until they reach the age of twelve years . . . There would remain a last thing to do to give the death blow to ignorance. This would excite many murmurs, perhaps, and many protests ; people would cry out that it was an injustice and a violation of political rights, but all these considerations would not bear a serious examination. This last thing

is to take away the right of voting from all persons who do not know how to read or write." In 1882 M. Martineau wrote as follows in a supplement published by "La Patrie :—" "Education is an absolute necessity for the peoples of the world, but especially for the young countries and for the nations that are commencing to use responsible and municipal government. If the parents by reason of antipathy or lack of interest do not wish to give their children an education, society ought to take them under its protection, in spite of the father, in spite of the family, in spite of every one, and instruct these children and make them good and honest citizens. Let us give the people education, let us make it compulsory. Ignorance is the death of intelligence. Now, when the law forbids suicide and forbids murder, should it not *à fortiori* forbid to kill the intelligence? Is not the spirit more than the body?"

The other disciple of Mercier's, soon to become one of the greatest apostles of the cause, was Raoul Dandurand, to-day Senator. In 1885 he was President of the Club National in Montreal and presided at a banquet held on May 27th, at which Mercier was present. In his address M. Dandurand said : "My friends, if we wish to save the people from certain ruin, and snatch them away from the political cormorants who pillage and steal

from them, it is necessary first of all to instruct them by imposing a system of compulsory education, as soon as a turn of fortune brings us to power." This speech was the occasion several years after of some bitter remarks from M. T. Chase Casgrain, deputy for Quebec in the Legislature during that memorable debate on the address in 1887, when the first Mercier Government met Parliament. The Opposition knew Mercier's real sentiments as expressed a few years before, and an attempt was made to draw out his intentions, now that he was in power. M. Casgrain said: "To-day the Prime Minister poses as the protector of Conservative principles, but in 1877 he was preaching the dangerous doctrine of compulsory education; and in 1885 one of his partisans expressed the same opinion, relying on the declarations of his chief." Then he referred to the banquet and quoted the words of "a certain M. Dandurand who presided." The criticism which M. Casgrain hurled at his young opponent, who sat in the galleries and heard it all, was not of the friendliest kind. "This 'enfant terrible' of the Liberal Party adds, 'The Club National demanded, in the programme which it elaborated, a system of compulsory education, in favour of which our valiant chief had declared himself since 1872.' . . . M. Mercier, the Liberal chieftain, was there, and not merely did not protest but must have ap-

plauded with the others, as 'La Patrie' assures us that the discourse of the President was frequently interrupted by applause. The Catholics of Quebec are well warned ; if they wish compulsory instruction, as they understand it in France and in Prussia, they have only to bring the Liberals into power. 'These brave fellows are only waiting for an accident to put into practice these frightful and subversive theories.'

All through Mercier's regime the Opposition was waiting and ready to attack him because of his well-known views about compulsory education. He apparently realized that there were other great educational problems that had to be settled first before universal education became practicable. The finances of the Province had to be put on a firm basis and more money spent on educational improvement, before any serious-minded person could think of winning popular approval for a policy of coercion. Mercier knew that a dead letter law was worse than no law at all, as it would be a bar to future progress. Yet notwithstanding this prudent policy, the Conservatives of the day used the former utterances of the Liberal leader to attack the Government. They seized any opportunity, as for example in 1890, when the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada passed a resolution asking for compulsory and free education throughout Canada, and

after the Montreal City Council had asked for free text-books. With regard to the former it is well to remember that the first organized and insistent public demand for free and compulsory education in Quebec came from Labour. For many years, since about 1896, the Trades and Labour Council of Montreal has included these two demands in the requests it makes every year to the Provincial Government. The Hon. Boucher de LaBruère, afterwards Superintendent of Public Instruction, asked for all correspondence relating to these resolutions. He soon slipped into the polemic manner, and talked of the danger which he saw in compulsory education, suggesting that the Government was really planning to bring in such a measure. Hon. Pierre Garneau, for the Government, assured the speaker that there was no truth whatsoever in his supposition ; the matter was not even under consideration. But, notwithstanding this emphatic denial, and the fact that subsequent history proved there was nothing in his guess, by the time that Hon. Boucher de LaBruère came to write his reminiscences in 1916, the incident had with the passing of the years become so lively and vivid that he treated it as a serious discussion of much importance, and devoted nearly a whole chapter to it and to an argument against compulsory education. As a matter of fact the chapter in the book is



hardly more than a reproduction of the speech. The old arguments are reproduced, but the Government's denial forgotten. He seemed to think as he rewrote it that he had saved education in Quebec from some Catilinarian conspiracy. Its only ground in the correspondence (which was readily produced by the Government) was that on receipt of the resolutions, Mercier had asked the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Hon. Gédéon Ouimet) for his advice on the probable cost of the proposed changes.

In 1892 or 1893 Mr. M. F. Hackett, now Judge Hackett, brought up the question of compulsory education, compulsory voting and equal taxation in the Legislature on a resolution. This was one of the first occasions on which the Legislature was asked to pronounce on the question. The writer is obliged to admit that he has not been able to locate this debate. There is no Hansard for these years. He has accepted the statement of Judge Hackett on the matter.

In 1896 the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Quebec passed a resolution in favour of compulsory education. This was apparently the first time the teachers had ever taken a stand in the matter. The records of the Association show no further reference to such a request till the matter was brought up in 1917. During the debates and agitation on the Finnie Bill,



the Protestant teachers gave no organized support.

During the Premiership of Hon. Felix Gabriel Marchand other phases of educational reform were to the fore, and the question of compulsory education was lost sight of for a time but not forgotten.

The man who will have the honour through all time for having first introduced a compulsory attendance bill in the Quebec Legislature is Tancred Boucher de Grosbois, M.D., who for several terms was deputy for Shefford County. He brought in a bill in 1901 "to assure a better attendance at school." His bill would have imposed on every parent or guardian in charge of a child between the ages of eight and thirteen years the obligation of sending that child to school of the municipality in which he resides, for at least 16 weeks of the term during the school remains open, provided that the teaching there given is in conformity with the religion of the said child. The usual exemptions were allowed, namely in case of (1) physical or mental inability, (2) residence more than two miles from the school, (3) education at home or in a private institution. Parents who broke the law would be fined not more than two dollars for the first offence and not more than five dollars for any subsequent offence. In the school census of each school municipality, which the secretary-treasurer is obliged to

make each year, he was to indicate in a separate column the children between eight and thirteen years, and lists of such children were to be transmitted in September to the teachers of each public school. The teacher was to transmit to the secretary-treasurer the name of any child who did not attend or who attended irregularly. It was then the duty of the secretary-treasurer to bring action against the parents in court. Dr. de Grosbois also provided a special penalty against any secretary-treasurer who failed to fulfil his duties under this bill.

It will be well to give a short sketch of the life of Dr. de Grosbois and to recall his name to the reformers of to-day. He was born in 1847 in Chambly, the son of Dr. Charles de Grosbois, who gave his name to Ile Grosbois, near Montreal, and of Emilie Boucher de Boucherville, sister of Hon. Charles E. Boucher de Boucherville. He went to the College at St. Hyacinthe for his classical course, and he was studying medicine at McGill University at the time Sir Wilfrid Laurier was studying law there. Though he was the nephew of the Conservative leader, he did not share his views on political questions ; in early life he became a Liberal. At that time it took real courage for a French-Canadian to adopt Liberalism as his creed ; Liberalism was (as we have seen) often condemned openly as the child of the French

Revolution, and in this Province was by many people misinterpreted in the theological sense of free-thinking. In 1872 Dr. de Grosbois became the Liberal standard-bearer in Chambly County in the Federal elections. The Conservative candidate was a certain M. Benoit, who was a very strong opponent. The French Conservative leaders came into the county, and it was one of the fiercest contests of that memorable election ; Chapleau, Lacoste, Ouimet and de Boucherville all spoke against the young Radical. One of the most interesting incidents of the campaign happened at a debate, when de Boucherville told his audacious young nephew to sit down while the latter insisted on speaking in his turn and asking questions out of his turn. The crowd seemed to enjoy the fearless way in which the young politician would not be cowed by his relative. Dr. de Grosbois was defeated by the narrow margin of 94 votes. A few years later he moved away from Chambly to Roxton Falls, in the County of Shefford. There he was again brought into political life, this time as friend and organizer of Hon. S. L. Huntington. In 1888 he was elected as member for Shefford to the Quebec Legislature. He was a personal friend of Mercier and served on several important commissions for the Mercier Government. Hon. Charles (now Judge) Langelier was one of his closest friends and admirers. Dr. de

Grosbois took a great interest in education, and his efforts were successful in securing increased grants to schools and colleges in several counties in the Eastern Townships.

Needless to say, Dr. de Grosbois was an advanced Liberal of the old type, and was not afraid nor ashamed of Radicalism. It was against the expressed wishes of his party leaders that he brought up his bill for discussion. It took real courage on the part of a private member to do this, and to keep his promise to his friends. But he saw the need, and seeing it, felt it to be his duty to become the pioneer of what was then a forlorn hope. In every great cause there are apt to be men who are called upon to suffer and to be misunderstood, and to secure for the moment no sufficient recognition of their services and their daring. It is only in later days that people begin to realize the great debt they owe these pioneers who cut a pathway through the desert where others might follow with greater ease and make faster progress. To-day Dr. de Grosbois is living in Montreal and takes as much interest as ever in the cause for which he fought so valiantly years ago. His bill was buried in oblivion ; some papers ignored it almost entirely, and no Montreal paper gave the debate the courtesy of an editorial. It seemed as if there was a conspiracy of silence. It must be a great encouragement for the aged doctor to see

to-day both French and English politicians and French and English papers championing the cause which only eighteen years ago everyone seemed to wish to forget as soon as possible.

The bill was introduced on March 5th, 1901, and came up for second reading on March 14th. On the latter occasion Dr. de Grosbois had a "hors d'œuvre" on the menu before the pièce de résistance was reached. This was in the form of a series of questions : (1) how many children in Quebec do not attend school because of poverty ? (2) how many children in the Province of Quebec do not attend school because they live too far from the school house ? (3) how many children in the Province of Quebec do not attend school because of the negligence or the ill-will of their parents ? Hon. M. Turgeon, Provincial Secretary, answered all these questions in the following terms : "The Department of Public Instruction has no information. Moreover this information is not given in the statistics of any country in the world." This reply, which of course was not M. Turgeon's own statement, but what he was told, is a good example of the shallow knowledge of school statistics on the part of those who ought to know. It is only too true as far as Quebec is concerned, but the one who framed it evidently knew little about other countries. One need only study the figures

given for the children who secure exemption from a compulsory law together with the reasons for such exemption, to find out how many children are out for legitimate reasons. The third question can be answered for other countries ; the prosecutions and convictions under the act would show how many proved cases there were of negligence on the part of parents. If those who framed the reply had said that the information was not at hand for the Province of Quebec and that it was not possible to get it without a compulsory law, and that they did not know about other countries, their reply would have been literally true. This was before the day of camouflage.

In moving the second reading of his bill Dr. de Grosbois said that over 6,000 children in this Province were growing up in ignorance because their parents neglected or were unwilling to send them to school. He desired to put an end to this deplorable state of affairs by forcing such parents to do their duty. He quoted ecclesiastical authorities of eminence to support his contentions that the state had the right to pass such a law and that it was not contrary to doctrines of the Catholic Church. Among these theologians were Mgr. Sauvé, Mgr. Kettler, the Bishop of Mayence, Jerome de Medicis, Tarapelli, St. Thomas and others. The illustrious theologian Tarapelli expressed himself



as follows on "natural right," and Dr. de Grosbois created quite a sensation in the Legislature as he read these words : "It is the duty of the civil authority to see that the child receives a satisfactory education. The state has the obligation, as taking the place of the supreme Father from whom a father's rights are derived, to awaken the parents from their lethargy and to force debased (*dénaturés*) parents to act as a father and not as a tyrant towards their children."

Hon. Turgeon moved the postponement of consideration for six months. He said he was not altogether opposed to the principle of compulsion in education, but thought it interfered with individual liberty, and the state had no right to force parents to send their children to be taught by parties to whom they might object on good grounds. He was opposed to the present bill because it did not originate in the Council of Public Instruction ; the members of the Council were experts and their duty was to advise the Government on such questions. He said this matter would be opposed by the bishops who had seats in the Council. Mr. W. A. Weir, then a private member sitting for Argenteuil, supported the bill on the ground that compulsory education had been a great service to other countries and it could not fail to be of service in Quebec. The Provincial Treasurer, Hon. Mr. Duffy, said it was



impossible to force parents to send their children to school without providing them with free education and free books. Hon. Mr. Flynn, leader of the Opposition, objected to the bill on principle and as inopportune. The Government might help in education, but it had no right to usurp the place of the parents. We have already seen this view and we shall meet it again. The vote was 55 to 7 ; those who voted for the bill were Messrs. Roy, Charles Langelier, Cherrier, Weir, Cochrane, Prévost and de Grosbois.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE LANGLOIS CAMPAIGN—THE FINNIE BILL.

The fate of the de Grosbois bill had a soporific effect on the advocates of this reform for several years. The next important occasion when the principle of compulsion was championed was in 1909, when the Catholic School Commission of Montreal, on the motion of Alderman Gallery, on November 23rd, passed a resolution addressed to the Legislature asking for some law to be passed to compel parents to send their children to school. The motion aroused an interesting debate. The proposer declared he did not wish to force the hand of the Government, but he wanted some one to find a means of keeping off the street the children who got lost there, and the adoption of a law was the only way of attaining this end. He wanted something to be done about the number of children who were growing up in the city without any education. He desired to avoid inflicting any hardships, but felt there should be some system to compel their attendance. There were children from seven to nine years who did not know the letters of the alphabet. He wanted these children to get some education. Judge Lafontaine deplored the fact that many children leave school too young ; parents sent their

children to school till their first communion and then let them go to work in factories, where they soon forgot what they had learned and went to increase the number of illiterates. Here was a clear case of exploitation on the part of the parents, and it was absolutely necessary to remedy this state of things. Commissioners Décarie and Dauth opposed the proposition ; they made the claim that the law which forces children to attend school up to a certain age has never given good results, and that one can count as many illiterates in countries where such a law is in force as in ours—a statement which could obviously only be substantiated by statistics, which (equally obviously) were not forthcoming. The vote stood : For—Judge La-Fontaine, Mr. Joseph McLaughlin, Aldermen Giroux, Lapointe and Gallery, 5 ; Against—Dr. Décarie, Abbé Demers, Canon O'Meara and Canon Dauth, who was then Chairman of the Commission.

From 1909 till 1913 a very vigorous campaign was carried on in this Province for educational reforms and particularly for a compulsory law by Mr. Godfroi Langlois, editor of *Le Pays*, and for the last three years of the period mentioned, deputy for St. Louis division in Montreal. Most of this time he played a lone hand and took chances ; his play was always interesting and often really brilliant, but it was sometimes lacking

in discretion. The criticisms which Mr. Langlois levelled from time to time at the educational system of Quebec and its administration were very telling shots, perhaps too much so for the comfort of the man who fired them. His fiery criticism seemed at times to lack the constructive aim and persuasive tone. It was difficult to realize all this at the time, as his witty sallies and brilliant repartee made the member for St. Louis the one man who stood any chance of meeting Sir Lomer in the tournament of parliamentary debate with fair chances. But as years went on it became evident that he had accomplished little. The very brilliance of the guerilla emphasized the need of a more constructively minded general, who could plan and carry out a great campaign in co-operation with fellow commanders. And it was still more evident that any successful leader must be above suspicion with reference to religious teaching. He spoke on education several times in Parliament and kept up a gruelling warfare in his paper, *Le Pays*. He loved to show up worn out methods and revelled in reading in the House, and asking the Government why they allowed them. On one occasion he found that a text book on Canadian History was still in use and authorized, though the book had been written long before Confederation and never revised ; in this book New Cale-

donia was named as one of the British possessions in North America and York was still the capital of Upper Canada. His fund of information regarding the working of our schools and the knowledge of the utterances of politicians in former days, was remarkable. Such ready information made him a doughty champion in debate when he chose to stir up the Government or the Provincial Secretary to greater activity for the cause of education. But his view point lent itself easily to misunderstanding on the part of those whose zeal for reforms is nicely counterbalanced by the satisfaction of working along comfortably in the old ways. Such people were apt to see in this fearless critic of existing conditions, who dared to poke fun at the Prime Minister, a pestilent fellow. He made it difficult for others to work with him ; yet he kept the question alive when more cautious men were allowing the flame to go out. One can not but admire his courage and sang froid ; he seemed utterly regardless of the consequences to himself when once he saw a work to be done, but went straight at it by the most direct way.

M. Langlois was one of the first to criticise official statistics adversely. These statistics were naturally taken at their face value and his criticism seemed at the time misplaced, and was not listened to patiently. In view of subsequent revelations it can now be

seen that M. Langlois had hit upon the proper view point. His information, however, was not sufficient to enable him to prove conclusively that the official figures were erroneous or misleading. He foresaw the line of action that was to prove so effective in future years in undermining the claim that the children of Quebec do make good use of their school privilege without compulsion.

M. Langlois' campaign and the knowledge that Dr. Finnie was to bring in a bill for Protestants, making education compulsory, kept the matter to the fore during the year 1912. In February of this year the Protestant Committee had given a definite lead in the matter by passing the following resolution in favour of compulsion, which was moved by Prof. Dale and seconded by Mr. McBurney. The former had been a persistent advocate, and had addressed many meetings on the subject, notably one at the Canadian Club of Montreal. "This Committee desires to express its approval of the principle of compulsory attendance at school for Protestant children of the Province, and its hope that the Legislature will, so soon as it is found possible, embody this principle in the laws of the Province." It is to be noted that this resolution did not approve of any particular scheme and said nothing with reference to the possibility of legislation for

one class of the community. It also gave a loophole for procrastination by asking the Government to pass a law when possible. In October the Montreal Herald published several interviews on the subject of a compulsory law. M. Macheras, Principal of the Montreal Technical School and M. Fyen, Director of the Ecole Polytechnique, both pronounced themselves in favour. So did Bishop Farthing. Judge Choquet, speaking at the Child Welfare Exhibition in October, declared that the first means necessary to stop juvenile crime was without doubt compulsory education. He also said the Juvenile Delinquents' Act should be amended so as to include disobedience as a delinquency. The existing law defined a delinquent as one who violated the criminal code, or any federal or provincial law or municipal ordinance, but there was nothing in the law making disobedience a juvenile misdemeanour. A child might refuse to obey his parents or to go to school and the Court could do very little, while the parent was responsible for the acts of the child and for his support. Subsequently Judge Choquet did succeed in getting this amendment passed and to-day he can deal with cases of disobedience when the parents make a complaint. He often deals with truants in this way. But the power of the Court in dealing with school attendance is very limited ; it affords abso-



lutely no protection to the child against a parent who is neglectful of his duty, nor against himself at the time when in his ignorance he thinks it the greatest thing in life to get freedom from school restraint and to earn money. This amendment did not touch the question of parental authority, and so it slipped through Parliament without much notice. But for all that, it is a step in the right direction along a road which must, it seems, be travelled by stages until the goal is reached by a great effort at the end.

M. Alphonse Verville, M.P. for Maisonneuve (Labour) spoke at a banquet in October that was given in honour of M. Letourneau ; he courageously affirmed the demands of the labouring man for compulsory education : "We demand, and we will never cease to demand free and compulsory education, the uniformity of texts and free books." Such a pronouncement hardly needs emphasis. Yet we cannot too often remind ourselves what a debt democratic education owes to organized labour. The Fisher Bill in England is largely the result of the intensive campaign carried on there by organized labour through the Workers' Educational Association. Organized labour the world over has demanded not merely a higher standard of living and better working conditions, but also better educational facilities. It has seen that without

education its policy was working in a circle ; to make the uplift permanent, an education was necessary that would give the workers a possibility of choosing the calling to be pursued. Without such an emancipation the working classes could break their birth's invidious bar only by violence.

Before the Finnie Bill was debated in the Legislature in November, 1912, the matter of educational policy had been the occasion of an out-spoken and fiery speech in the House by Sir Lomer Gouin, which was of more than passing moment ; it was a regular philippic against the Quebec newspaper, *L'Action Sociale* (Catholique). Sir Lomer showed he would brook no interference with the right of Parliament to legislate and that he would not be frightened from his determination of carrying out a sane policy of educational reform by any threat or attack. The origin of this discussion is to be found in some remarks by M. Auguste Tessier, deputy for Rimouski. When moving the address, he had said : "The future of the country depends on the younger generation which is being educated in our schools by the teachers. There is without doubt much to be done along the line of progress, many reforms to be brought about. The attendance at the schools is not what it should be, and the statistics record unfortunately a condition which it would be wrong to conceal, since it

is necessary to know the whole extent of an evil in order to combat it. The trouble in this province is that there are too many children who do not go to school. The evil being known and studied, I have confidence that the remedy will be applied without any faltering. Then there is the question of free books. All these questions deserve to be studied and discussed honestly ; they should be taken up resolutely with the fullest regard on both sides for honest convictions. The House and the country hope the Government will follow up with perseverance the improvement of our educational system, without rashness and without timidity, standing firmly by liberal principles and ready to defend against all attacks the rights of citizenship." Sir Lomer as usual complimented the mover on his speech. This gave L'Action Sociale occasion to write an editorial full of perverse questions suggesting evil intentions in the mind of the Prime Minister. It asked if the speech of M. Tessier was merely an audacious effort on his own part or if it marked a new policy on the part of the Liberal Prime Minister, and it added the defamatory sting at the end by characterizing Sir Lomer as one who was ready to take up educational reform along revolutionary lines. "Is it true that in order to retain the friendship of the Radical-Masonic group, from which it does not differ

materially on the matter of state education, the Liberal majority is ready to start now an increasing war on the Church and Catholic families over the schools, which would first become an instrument of domination and soon of perversion ?” This article also asked if the appointments of Messrs. Martineau, Prévost, Perron and Brisebois, who were generally known as friends of reform, to the Catholic Committee, were to be taken as indicating the true and effective orientation of the present educational policy. On Nov. 13th, Sir Lomer replied in the Legislature, declaring that the article was defamatory and denouncing it roundly ; in order that there might be no chance of misunderstanding he charged Abbé D’Amours with being the author. He called attention to similar calumniating articles that had appeared during the elections in the spring, and said that since Abbé D’Amours had been with this paper, he had found nothing better to do than to look for a religious quarrel. Sir Lomer was particularly emphatic with reference to the suggestion that his policy was leading towards godless schools. He said the article was calumniating when it suggested that the Government was ready, in order to retain the friendship of certain radicals, to turn over to them the control of public instruction ; it was particularly defamatory when it suggested in this underhand way that he was ready to

begin and carry on without end a war against the Church. The Prime Minister has seldom been heard to speak out with such passionate indignation and determination. He took good care that his words should not be misunderstood, for he made direct charges against both the paper and its editor. He said he felt it a necessity to reply to this article as many readers would believe such statements unless they were contradicted. It was evident that the friends of the Government knew the Prime Minister was to make this speech that afternoon, for when the House opened the galleries were filled with distinguished visitors. Notwithstanding this straightforward answer and direct charge, L'Action Sociale came back with a rejoinder a few days after and charged the Prime Minister with evading the issue, and asked again if he approved of Mr. Tessier's speech or not. It assured its readers that "the radical group in the Liberal party has always received more concessions than are desirable."

Dr. J. T. Finnie, member for St. Lawrence division, Montreal, had for years taken an interest in Protestant education, and on several previous occasions had brought educational matters before the Legislature. He had tried to bring in a bill of compulsory education the past session, but amid the routine of parliamentary business, his bill had been continually delayed. Finally, he

came to an agreement with those who arrange the orders of the day; he was not to press his bill that session, which by the way was the one before an election, but he was to be given an opportunity early in the next session. On November 26th, 1912, the bill came up for second reading. It had been drafted by Dr. Finnie in conjunction with Mr. Peter Berco-vitch, who is now the deputy for the St. Louis division of Montreal. It proposed to make education compulsory between the ages of seven and thirteen for all children who were not of the Roman Catholic faith; it would have classed as Protestants all those children who, under the existing school law have no school rights. The law was to apply to all public and private schools alike. School boards were to appoint and pay truant officers. Fines were provided against negligent parents; they ranged from \$5 to \$20. There was to be no appeal from any judgment given against a parent under this law.

The general views on education of the promoter of the bill did not tend to win him sympathizers. The Whitney Government in Ontario had just passed Regulation 17, limiting the opportunities for French teaching in the separate schools in that Province. Le Devoir was then publishing a series of letters from Quebec Protestants on this question of the Ontario separate schools; several McGill professors had (without wishing to interfere



in the affairs of another Province) expressed their regret at a policy that would deprive the French Canadians of a privilege which they held dear in the use of their language. Dr. Finnie in his letter to *Le Devoir* replied in part as follows: "Frankly I think the objections that you and others are raising are largely exaggerated, if not sentimental; . . . the school regulations of Ontario are rather a great advantage to the French Canadian pupil and widen his opportunities much more than many in the Province of Quebec enjoy." (*Le Devoir*, October 17th, 1912). This lack of sympathy for the love of his language which the French Canadian prizes next to his religion, particularly on the part of one who was in a few weeks to become the leader of the Protestant Minority in Parliament in demanding compulsory education, was a bad augury. If Protestant leaders were to take that view, could they expect much sympathy in turn for their demand for special legislation, which was known to cause misgivings on the part of many?

When the bill came up for second reading, Dr. Finnie was followed by Hon. P. S. G. Mackenzie, the Provincial Treasurer, who opposed the bill and could see little good in it. He considered Protestants were divided on the question and did not think the moment had arrived when the Legislature would be justified in applying the principle of com-



pulsory education. Moreover, if education is to be compulsory, schooling and books must be free, which would be too expensive. This argument was not new; it was used in 1901 against the bill of Dr. de Grosbois. And while free education is greatly to be desired, particularly the absence of fees, yet in many countries it has come by degrees and has caused no upheaval in public finance. Often free education has not followed a compulsory law for years. In England education in most schools was made compulsory in 1876 and in all in 1881, yet fees were only gradually abolished. Stages were marked by the acts of 1891 and 1902; but the Fisher act of 1918 is the first to contain the categorical statement "no fees shall be charged or other charges of any kind made in any public elementary school."\*

The cost of education must be met by the community in one way or another. The present school law in Quebec has for years protected the poor man by providing that his children shall not be refused an education because he can not pay for it. School boards may now (though not in 1912) abolish fees entirely. The city of Montreal now has no elementary school fees. There seems no insuperable difficulty in taking one reform at a

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\* The only exceptions to this rule are those payments provided for under the Provision of Meals Act of 1906, and the Medical Treatment Act of 1909.

time, if the boards can not afford to remit fees at once. It was a clever debating point on the part of the Provincial Treasurer, quite useful on the hustings, to suggest that compulsory education and its sequelae would increase taxation tremendously. There are always plenty of people who want to keep down taxes and who will be frightened by this bogey. The Provincial Treasurer in his zeal to save the dollars never asked the question whether free education was worth while as a national investment. Surely the example of the United States, where education is as free as running water, might have provided an inspiration, if one were needed.

One of the main reasons why the Provincial Treasurer opposed this bill was because it was for Protestants only. The very safeguard which the promoter had been so careful to apply, proved one of the readiest arguments against the bill. "If it is a quasi crime, punishable by fine and imprisonment not to do a certain thing by the adherents of one religious persuasion, and that another is immune, though guilty of the same offence, such a differentiation, in my opinion, would result in breeding contempt for all law, and would be conducive to evasion and equivocation." Mr. Mackenzie took care to point out, in reply to Dr. Finnie who had reminded the House that the Provincial Treasurer was a member of the Protestant Committee which

was in favor of the principle, that he had left the room when the matter came to the vote in the February meeting.

Such untempered opposition on the part of the Protestant representative in the Cabinet caused some surprise and misgivings among the English people of the Province. It was well remembered that only six years before, when he was a private member and out to win his spurs, Mr. Mackenzie had stood up to the Government as an advocate of a more vigorous policy in Protestant education and had attacked the Protestant Committee, and in consequence had been taken to task by Hon. Mr. McCorkill, who was then Provincial Treasurer. Now as a member of the Cabinet he opposed compulsory education as being "untimely," and has asserted there was a difference of opinion among Protestants on the matter. He might have said there was a difference of opinion on the present bill demanding special legislation for Protestants only; but on the larger question he might also have truthfully stated that much of this difference of opinion existed only in the minds of over-cautious politicians and their official admirers.

The next speaker was Mr. Langlois, who spoke with his usual vigour and brilliance. He said that despite temporary opposition, which might be violent, compulsory education was sure to come; the previous session the

Finnie bill had been given a third class burial, this session it received the honour of a caucus.

Mr. Bullock, the deputy for Shefford, made his first speech in Parliament against this bill. There was no mandate for it. It began at the wrong end of a great movement, he wanted a campaign for better schools, better teachers and better salaries. It was a bill for one class only, and there would be difficulties and embarrassments in enforcing it. M. Armand Lavergne, deputy for Montmagny, could not conceal his indecision. "I do not for one moment believe the liberty of parents is being encroached on by the measure which is at present before the House. It is a measure which we must not hesitate to face without fear or prejudice." He did not consider the principle involved at all a revolutionary one. He and M. Cousineau thought the Protestants had a right to it if they wanted it. M. Tellier, Leader of the opposition, said it was not a religious question (one is glad to see he recognized that), and therefore the minority could not claim it as a right arising out of the separate system. M. Tellier said that 77 ½% of our children were attending school as proved by official statistics, while similar statistics for Ontario showed only 61%. M. Francoeur, deputy for Lotbinière, said he would favour such a bill in case the House was convinced that compulsory education was necessary and a remedy for exist-

ing defects. But he would not vote for any partial scheme, and he thought the official statistics showed it was not necessary. M. Sequin, deputy for St. Mary's division, Montreal, said he spoke for the labouring classes and remarked that what the labouring man wanted was free education before being fined for not sending his children to school.

One of the most important speeches of the whole debate, both by reason of its frank advocacy of the principle as well as because the harbinger of future leadership, was the speech of the newly-elected deputy from St. Hyacinthe, M. T.-D. Bouchard. He warned the deputies that there were some who would profit by this bill to find some relation between the principle of it and the ideas of the Republican party in France, though none whatever existed. He said he was satisfied with the general system of education in Quebec which provided religious schools, but he thought it was a serious mistake to suppose our present system was like a sacred arch, from which every profane hand was to be kept away, for fear that if one stone was touched, it would at once fall in ruins. "And now, if the state has given us the duty of paying for education for all, ought it not to do justice to those who pay, by forcing those for whom they are called upon to pay, to make sacrifices to take advantage of it by compelling them to send

their children to school? Is not compulsory education simply the correlative of compulsory taxation? You compel me to pay for those who can not pay; you will at least decree that the latter shall not make a part of my expense a mere loss." One of the most telling parts of his speech was a long quotation from the royal decrees of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. of France, in 1689 and again in 1724 decrees were passed enjoining all parents, "particularly those of the so-called reformed faith," to send their children to the parish schools. He did not see how a principle which had been applied in the days when the clergy had control of education, could be so revolutionary to-day. He said it was just because he was a friend of the separate school system and of autonomy for both parties, that he proposed to vote for the Finnie bill. But later on when so many Protestant members had opposed the present bill, he said he would not impose it on a minority that was divided against itself; he voted with the majority.

Sir Lomer spoke on the second day of the debate, after M. Langlois. He emphasized the fact that this bill was class legislation. "But a penal law should be applied to all alike, though this bill requires us to make a distinction, and I ask the question whether in any country of the world this is done. If we adopt it, we punish those who are not Catholics, and let go free from censure those who



are Catholics. . . . It was exactly because it did not concern the whole people that the bill was defective, and the only way it could be made a just law would be to have it apply to the entire Province in the same manner. The members of the House could not be regarded as serious men if they adopted a law penalizing a certain class of fathers of families. The only proper method would be to penalize as fathers, not as Protestant fathers, as was proposed by this bill." He said Mercier would never have approved of this bill ; he had too generous a nature, and would never have himself submitted a bill showing such discrimination to one part of the Province. Sir Lomer quoted the official figures from the Report of the Superintendent, according to which Quebec was much ahead of the other provinces of the Dominion, although we have no compulsory law. He also quoted from works or speeches by Geo. Goyau, Jules Ferry, and Premier Briand to show that the French law was not all that could be desired.

The peroration of Sir Lomer's speech is as follows : "We all wish, both Protestants and Catholics, to make of this Province the greatest and most important of the Dominion. We have no unfortunate school questions in this Province ; that is why we wish to be allowed to carry on a wise policy which will permit us to avoid this dangerous stumbling-block. I am an enthusiast for liberty and for



liberty for all. I am of the opinion that we must exhaust every other means before having recourse to coercion. For all these reasons I believe it is my duty to vote against the bill which is now submitted to us."

Near the end of the debate Col. Smart, from Westmount, tried to save the bill from a direct defeat by moving to refer the whole matter to the Council of Public Instruction. Such a proposal might have been considered safe enough and quite in conformity with educational traditions in Quebec. One Conservative Government in the eighties had promised to submit all projects for reform in the school law to the Council before bringing the matter before Parliament. It was used as an argument against the proposal of the Marchand Government in 1898-99 to erect a Ministry of Education that this proposal had never been submitted to the Council. But this amendment of Col. Smart's won only three more votes than the six who voted for the bill ; these three were Messrs. Lavergne, Gault and Cousineau. In closing the debate Dr. Finnie realized that his bill was to suffer defeat ; he said his guns had been spiked but that he would try again. The matter would not down. Before the vote was taken, Mr. Vilas from Brome and Mr. Walker from Huntingdon left the House. Mr. Campbell (Pontiac) said he was in favour, but was paired with Mr. E. A. Robert

(Beauharnois). The final vote was 62 to 6. Those who voted with Dr. Finnie were M. Langlois (St. Louis), Mr. N. G. Scott (Compton), Mr. Harry Slater (Argenteuil), Col. C. A. Smart (Westmount), and Mr. D. Tansey (St. Ann's).

There were a few rumblings in the Eastern Townships after the bill had been defeated. The Liberal Associations in Huntingdon and Brome passed resolutions bidding the deputies who might represent them in future to vote for a compulsory law. Such votes of censure showed that the rank and file of the English voters had not been so indifferent as had been believed. It is seldom that such a decided action is taken with reference to the action of a sitting member by his constituents. This incident might point a moral as well as adorn this tale.

To realize the virulence of the opposition at this time, one needs to read the pages of such papers as *La Croix*, *La Vérité*, and *L'Action Sociale*. They never ceased to repeat that free and compulsory education were anti-religious in principle and those who advocated them were *ipso facto* inspired by a desire to attack religion. The right of the parents and the right of the Church, said these organs, are superior to those of the State, and the State must not dictate to the parents in this matter of education nor even provide that the schools shall be free to all. It was evident there were some whose eyes were not open to see the truth of obvious

facts, and that they would oppose to the end of the chapter. They seemed to care little for the progress of education so long as their own theories remained operative in our educational system.

But there were others who were in favour of the cause, though they did not support the form which the measure had taken which had just been before Parliament. The words of *Le Canada*, in an editorial the day after the defeat of the bill, will illustrate this attitude. "The reasons given by Sir Lomer to support his viewpoint do not touch the principle ; they proceed from the conviction that the bill is premature as it is not demanded by public opinion (a peremptory reason !), and that it applies to a part only of the population, while a law of this kind being a penal law, ought to apply to the whole population without exception. The Provincial Parliament will recognize without doubt the solid foundation of these objections, which time will be able to dispel. . . . It remains for those who believe compulsory education would raise the general level of education in this province to continue to enlighten public opinion on this question, and to prepare the minds of the people for a future progressive legislation which will enable us to consecrate in the civil law the incontestable moral obligation which parents have to give their children the primary instruction put at their disposal by society."



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BELGIAN LAW—FOREIGNERS WITH NO SCHOOL RIGHTS—THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

Senator Dandurand had been in Belgium in 1912 ; when he returned to Canada that October he sent several letters to the press in favour of a compulsory law, outlining the course of events in Belgium. "The Belgian Government, which is in the hands of Catholics and supported by all the Catholic clergy, does not hesitate to proclaim in its bill free primary instruction and the obligation of the parents to give that instruction to their children. . . . It rallied at the elections of June last all the Catholic forces. The adoption of this policy was imposed upon the ministerial majority by the fact that each year was showing an increased proportion of conscripts unable to read and write." The previous year, there were 128 illiterates in every thousand of the Belgian conscripts, whilst in neighbouring countries where compulsory education was in force, there was only from one to forty per thousand. In Germany the proportion was less than one per thousand.

The example of the Belgian Law of 1914 has undoubtedly exercised a deep influence on public opinion in Quebec. It is interesting to study just why this law was proposed and

in what form it was carried, after being opposed for many years. To understand the question, we must sketch briefly the history of Belgian education. The Belgian constitution of 1831 proclaimed the most absolute liberty of teaching. The first school law was passed in 1842 by a coalition Government. One of the aims of this law was to preserve intact the religious character of the people. Moral and religious instruction were declared inseparable and constituted one of the most important subjects, obligatory in all schools and for all pupils (except Protestants and Jews, where no school of their faith existed in the commune). The atmosphere of the schools was religious and the normal schools taught religious instruction. This was supervised by the local clergy. In a communal school the class teacher had to give the religious instruction. Every commune had to found at least one school of its own, under the dual control of the Church and the State ; the former supervised religious instruction, the latter the remainder. Any commune could "adopt" a private school, usually taught by clergy, and in that case need not found one of its own. Education was neither compulsory nor free. This system was in force till 1878, when a radical Government under Frère-Orban got control of power and determined to banish religious instruction. They proposed to carry out the aims of La

Ligue d'Enseignement Belge and to separate the Church and the schools. Religious instruction as well as ecclesiastical inspection was banished by the law of 1879, and communes were prohibited from adopting private schools. The Government proposed to bring in a compulsory law, but its defeat in the elections of 1884 prevented this. The clergy opposed the law of 1879 in every conceivable way ; thousands of private schools were founded and the children in large numbers left the communal schools to attend these. In 1884 as many as 3,885 private schools had been founded. When the Catholic Party returned to power in that year, it at once set to work to repeal the law of 1879. Before this had been accomplished the communal elections took place and gave the Liberals a majority ; the latter cried out there was a reaction. The King intervened and caused some of the ministers to resign, particularly M. Charles Woeste, deputy for Alost, who was one of the most determined opponents of the secular scheme. This law of 1884 went far to restoring the *status quo ante*, though there were some survivals. One of these was the provision that where a certain number of parents demand it, the communal school must banish religious instruction from the course except for a short lesson in the morning. In the cities it worked out so that religious instruction formed a very small part of the



course. Besides every commune had to support a communal school if twenty parents demanded it.

The law of 1895 made religious instruction obligatory again and gave larger grants to private and adopted schools. To this law an amendment was proposed by a Liberal to make education compulsory. M. Woeste objected. His one reason for his opposition is interesting, it is so different from the reasons advanced in Quebec. (Quoted from Parl. Debates, July 24th, 1895): "Besides, it is vain to try to deny that compulsory education would mean in a large number of communes a compulsory school. I know that our adversaries of all shades cry, we wish compulsory education, not compulsory schools. Whatever are their intentions, we must look at the facts. When compulsory education was established in France, one of the chiefs of the Catholic Party, M. Chesnelong, said in the Senate, 'For three-quarters of the French families, compulsory education amounts to a compulsory public school.' And that would be true in Belgium as in France. It would be impossible for it to be otherwise. Look, gentlemen, under the law of 1879, we made a great effort to found private schools everywhere. We created almost 4,000. Nevertheless, it would have been impossible to receive all the children in these 4,000 schools. From this it follows, that if you

had then established compulsory education, it would have meant compulsory schools for a great number of parents." As years went on and the adopted and private schools were given larger grants, a difference of opinion in the Catholic Party made itself felt on this question. But the facts regarding illiteracy among the recruits, when they became known, proved the decisive factor that made the law at once possible. The Prime Minister, M. Schollaert, brought in a bill in 1911 that proposed to make education compulsory, but provided no penalties, except that of the public disapproval that might fall on a negligent parent. A clause in the bill forbade employment of children under 14. This bill was defeated in the Standing Committee before it ever reached the Chamber of Representatives. (Every bill in Belgium has to be reported by such a Standing Committee). M. Schollaert was forced to resign. Baron de Broqueville then became Prime Minister and he promised to bring in a compulsory law. The bill was first brought up in 1912, but it did not reach the statute books till May, 1914. The man who acted as sponsor or "reporter" for the bill in the Standing Committee was the same M. Charles Woeste, who had opposed such a law for years. The bill was in charge of M. Prosper Pouillet, Minister of Arts and Sciences, and he had the active support of M. Woeste. It gave the greatest

possible freedom of choice among schools and subsidized freely the adopted and private schools so as to enable them to compete more equally with the communal schools. A strong conscience clause was put in so that any Catholic parent who objected to the tone of the school such as that of the communal schools in a large city, might be exempted from the obligation by proving conscientious objection.

Undoubtedly the example of the Belgian law had a tempering effect on the opposition of all those in Quebec who were open to persuasion. Comparisons were quickly made between Quebec and Belgium, and it was at once seen that the two countries were very similar. In both there were religious schools, in Belgium some only of the schools were religious, in Quebec all the schools were. If such a law could be worked without hardship in Belgium, why not in Quebec also? The Belgian law finally gave the lie, the direct lie, to the argument that compulsory education was a step towards neutral, unsectarian schools ; for in Belgium the law had been passed by the very party which had held power for over thirty years on the promise of opposing neutral schools. And in Belgium the Catholic Party had found nothing revolutionary in giving the State, through the intermediary of the communes, more rights over education by compelling parents to give their

children a minimum of instruction. The Belgian law with its reasonable provisions for enforcing attendance and all its safeguards, showed for all whose eyes were not holden, that compulsory education was a natural development to be expected in a democratic country, and that in itself it had not the slightest relation to Jacobinism.

The attendance figures for Belgium are interesting. The following are taken from a speech by Baron Deschamps, Minister of Arts and Sciences in the Belgian Parliament, on February 24th, 1910 : "There were on November 15th, 1908, just 1,160,582 children between 5 and 14 years. At the same date there were in the schools 1,107,610 children of the same ages. The difference is 52,972. Of these we must subtract 6,621 abnormal children. This leaves a total of the children who are not attending school, neglecting those who receive education at home and who are not counted, amounting to 46,351." The minister said these figures had been analyzed with the greatest care. In 1897, out of 1,053,854 children of these ages there were 121,072, or 11.49% not attending school ; in 1908 out of 1,160,582 children there were 46,381 not attending school, or 3.13%. Yet for all this progress, the people of Belgium were not satisfied to shout in dithyrambic strain, 'Honour to Belgium.' When the need of compulsion was shown by the literacy of the

conscripts, the Catholic Party was not afraid to resort to compulsion to destroy that dragon of modern democracy, illiteracy. In Belgium there was no argument about statistics, however much progress they showed, and no attempt to camouflage the situation. The Government was ready to take the natural step as soon as the need was well proved.

A statement from the Minister of Arts and Sciences who carried this bill through Parliament, would be very interesting; such a letter was written by M. Prosper Poulet on April 4th, 1918. Speaking of opposition to this bill he writes: "The Catholic clergy did not combat the school law of 1914 which introduced compulsory education in Belgium. For a long time an important fraction of the clergy and of the Catholic Party has been hostile to the principle of compulsion. This is because the subsidies voted under the law of 1895 to free schools seemed to them insufficient to guarantee the foundation of religious schools wherever necessary. The law of 1914 having increased the amount of the subsidies, this objection fell to the ground."

Thus the influence of Belgium counterbalanced in Quebec the influence of revolutionary France.

The Local Council of Women of Montreal has for years championed the cause of a compulsory law. Miss Carrie M. Derick, Professor of Botany at McGill University, recently

appointed by the Protestant Committee as an associate member, has been a most faithful exponent of this need before the meetings of the Local Council. Time after time the Montreal branch of this association has urged the Provincial Government of Quebec to pass such a law. At the meeting of the National Council held in Montreal in May, 1913 the question of compulsory education was put down for discussion by women from a neighbouring province, who wanted a more effective administration of the law, but naturally enough the local situation was discussed. The speakers were Mr. Payson Smith, Commissioner of Education for the State of Maine, and Prof. J. A. Dale, of McGill. The former spoke of the need of universal education in a democracy, and said that compulsion was the only way to secure it. Prof. Dale told how compulsion would improve education in the Province of Quebec. Senator Dandurand was to have presided but was called away to Washington on public business; Sir William Peterson took his place. Senator Dandurand wrote a letter to the National Council expressing his regrets and explaining his point of view. In outlining the educational situation in the Province of Quebec, Senator Dandurand said he wished to correct the impression that the people of Quebec were indifferent to educational development. "It is the universal opinion throughout the civil-



ized world that society must benefit by the obligation of compulsory education of children being imposed upon reluctant citizens." He frankly admitted that some people in Quebec had been hostile to the principle, "the argument being that the people knew their duty and fulfilled it, and that such a law would be an instrument of persecution and could be used without discretion in a rude, vexing and cruel manner." He said that he found on inquiry that "such a law serves as a healthful stimulant to the neglected minority of parents and that it is invariably applied in a fatherly way. The real truth is that compulsory education would meet with no opposition in Quebec, if it was not feared that public and neutral schools would follow, as they had followed the adoption of the principle in France. That is a vain and baseless fear, because in our dual system of education, Protestant and Catholic, there is no possible place for the public school, and still less for the godless school. The whole population of this Province strongly believes in confessional\*

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\*The Senator's perfectly correct use of this term caused a strange scene in the meeting—one which reveals the slightness, yet at the same time the obduracy, of the causes of misunderstanding. A Roman Catholic lady member from Ontario, unfamiliar with French, violently attacked the Senator's catholicity for his connecting the confessional with the school! She only seemed half convinced by Prof. Dale's assurance that "*écoles confessionnelles*" is the French equivalent of "religious" or "denominational" schools. She probably went away with her mind clouded, and as much in the dark about the movement as the audience were about the grounds of her passionate protest, which conveyed no meaning to them.



schools, where the young minds of the children are early imbued with religious principles. It should need but a short campaign of education to determine a unanimous adhesion to a principle which has found favor with all the enlightened people in the world. The Catholic School Commission of Montreal has already approved of compulsion. If it does not carry to-day, it will to-morrow."

The reference to the need of a campaign of education among the people was much to the point. This had been Mercier's idea thirty years before, but it had been ignored by subsequent reformers in their haste. Mercier knew that the fruit of the reform could never be gathered in till the ground had been tilled intensively. And soon the war was to put such a premium on training and preparation for life work, and on the value of human life, that several leaders would come forward to plan an organised campaign of agitation that would knock imperiously at the doors of both the Protestant and Catholic Committees as well as on the doors of the Cabinet Chamber.

In February, 1915 a sub-committee of the Protestant Committee reported on the educational facilities in Montreal at the disposal of the foreign immigrant. The school law drafted years ago, makes provision for the education of Catholics and Protestants; recently Jews were classed in with the Protestants for school purposes. But there are

several thousand children who have no school rights; most of them are members of the Greek Orthodox Church, a few are non-Christian. No child from such families has any legal right in the schools, and if admitted at all is subject to the payment of a heavy school fee. Mr. Murray's sub-committee found about 3,600 such children, and estimated that under normal conditions the number would increase to five or six thousand in a few years. It seems to be the usual practice with both Boards to demand a certificate from the pastor of such children before admitting them to school. The Churches were trying to meet this problem by special classes, but at that time the school boards were doing nothing in the matter. Within the last few years each board has had to meet extraordinary expenditure in building new schools to accommodate their own children, and this burden has been increased by annexations of territory. But that is no valid reason for burking the whole problem till a more convenient season. Nothing has been done by the Provincial Legislature to satisfy the educational rights of these children. Meantime a large foreign population has been growing to maturity in Montreal in illiteracy and ignorance of Canadian ideals and traditions, and in many cases, it is to be feared, with no practical knowledge of either of the official languages of the Province. This report was

never distributed as it might have been; but when its contents became known to educationists it presented another argument for a compulsory law that would be all-inclusive. For the protection of the community it was realized that a large foreign population must not be allowed to grow up in our midst so ill prepared to take their part in our democracy.

A Royal Commission on Technical Education, was appointed in 1911 with Dr. J. W. Robertson as chairman. Its report, which came out in 1913, contained a very strong statement of the need of a compulsory law for Quebec from the pen of Prof. J. A. Dale of McGill University. His statement contains such an admirable summing up of the disabilities under which the system of voluntary attendance labours, that we will quote some paragraphs almost entire. (Part IV of the Report, pages 1847-1849).

"The enquiry into the technical and industrial education of a country naturally focuses itself on the connecting points between the school system which trains the majority of the children, and the after life into which they pass. For the establishment of any work in higher education reveals immediately the true state of previous preparation in the students, and drives the enquiry back to the school system. What is the connection between the school and the after life of its pupils?

This question goes straight to the heart of the matter and demands solution of some of the profoundest problems not only of education but of national life. . . .”

“In its main features the case is the same in all industrial communities which have developed a system of universal education. In nearly all such places education is compulsory, 14 being the usual age. Yet it is found that children leave school too early to have mastered the subjects of the school course, or to be ready to take up at once such reasonable preparation as is needed for skilled labour. They leave just as they are attaining the capacity to profit by school work, and before the industrial organization has for them a worthy and profitable place (especially since the disappearance of apprenticeship). The subsequent shortage of skilled labour is known to every employer of good labour; the moral harvest of the shiftless years is the despair of every reformer, and one of the heaviest burdens of the modern state. . . .”

Prof. Dale goes on to remark that as with the flaws, so with the remedies: they are much the same for all countries. He mentions several remedies such as compulsory education, which he places first, then continuation classes, improved training of teachers, etc. He remarks that compulsory education must come first and that the other reforms necessarily follow if the organization of education is

regarded as a business proposition. To quote again:

“It would not be necessary to touch upon the case for compulsion if it were not that the province of Quebec had not adopted the principle. This is owing mainly no doubt, to the fact that it has two entirely distinct systems of schools, the Catholic and the Protestant; and there has perhaps been a misunderstanding that a compulsory system might interfere with the denominational character of the former. Without covering the arguments for compulsion I desire to point out the chief ways in which the absence of compulsion hampers the education of the children of Montreal.

“(a). In the first place, it greatly reduces the efficiency of the present system. There has been much criticism [on various grounds]. But before assigning the blame, it is necessary to see if that system is working under fair conditions. This is obviously not the case where many children do not go to school at all, and where the great majority leave too early. The schools can not be blamed for the failure of those whom it has had no fair chance to train. To give them a fair chance, it is absolutely essential that regular attendance should be enforced from the beginning to the end of the course. Then it will be easier to come to a fair judgment

as to whether that course really does succeed in preparing children for life.

“(b). It hampers the improvement of the present system. It is far easier to handle both a single class and a whole system where the attendance is constant throughout the whole course, and far easier to introduce desirable changes without dislocation.

“(c). It hampers the development of higher grades of education and of intelligent work, because there is no hard and firm foundation of previous preparation. It is found everywhere, (to take an example) that great numbers of students, anxious to take advantage of the evening classes, are too ill prepared. This is true also in most places which have compulsion, because no place has as yet a complete system which has been working long enough; but the difficulty is felt far less where the system is most complete.

“(d). It depresses the quality of the supply of teachers. A good standard of previous preparation makes better training possible; for the trainers of teachers now have to spend much time on teaching subjects which ought to be mastered in school, and so lose time which is much needed for professional work, especially as in this province where the course is, in any case, short. If the schools are to be improved, it can only be through the improvement of the teachers.



“(e). It prevents the due care of children in matters outside the narrower conception of education; for there is no complete record of the city’s children. With compulsion there comes the school census, the complete list, corrected yearly, of all children of school age. In this way the record of each child is kept, and it is shown if children are being neglected, or exploited, or are defective, or in any way need such help as the community is prepared to secure for them. I will not enlarge on this: the greatest of city problems is the care of its children. The lack of record and of publicity which hampers every movement for their welfare is just the condition of affairs in which thrive the agencies of degeneration.

“(f). On these special counts and in general it is false economy. It neglects the development of the most fundamental and vital resources, the brains of its future citizens. It depends too much on the abundant supply of fresh trained brains from immigration, and on the possibilities of success offered to untrained talent by almost boundless natural resources. In a word it belongs to the pioneer stage.”

The statement on behalf of the Sherbrooke Board of Trade touched on the same matter; we quote parts. This too is found in Vol. IV of the Report.

“One of the most serious aspects of the



educational question as seen by us, is that of first securing the attendance of the children at our elementary schools. To an extent which is a menace to the character and ability of our future citizens, there is a marked disinclination on the part of parents to send their children to school beyond the most elementary stages; while there is an appreciable number who are indifferent to the educational training of their children altogether. In our opinion this is to some extent due to the defectiveness of our school law, which does not provide for the compulsory attendance of the children of school age, although it does enact that the monthly school fee is exigible for each child from seven to fourteen years of age, whether he attends school or not; unless exempted in virtue of article 249 of this act. . . .

“We would suggest that the most practicable way to remove the existing conditions is to make education free and compulsory in the Elementary and Model grades, and that, if feasible, it should be extended to the Academy grades. We believe that the educational facilities and advantages offered by the schools of our province should be equal at least to the best that are in existence, and that the resources for such schools ought to be commensurable with the demand for them. A wider recognition on the part of the Government and the municipality of this demand would awaken a sense of responsi-

bility for the creation of a compulsory school system.

"One of the results of the imperfect preparation for their life's work is that when the boys are apprenticed it is found by the foreman that many of them are incapable of working the comparatively simple problems in arithmetic as required by their trades. . . ."

The conviction that illiteracy is a serious obstacle to social welfare was strongly confirmed in the weekly meetings of the Social Workers' Federation.\* Here the actual experience of workers, professional and volunteer, showed conclusively how social misfortune, maladjustment, and delinquency are increased and made more difficult to prevent or correct by the presence of illiteracy or a very low standard of education.

To quote again from Professor Dale's evidence:—"Modern democracy and modern industry require the support of an educated people. But educational systems have developed during a time of rapid transition. They grew to some fixity before there was any clear realization, either of the need to be met by education, or of the means of meeting it. . . . All the most vital move-

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\* Now the Social Workers' Club: it began (in 1916) under the presidency of Professor Dale, and owes its success to the energy of Mr. John Bradford of the Y.M.C.A. Its membership represents practically every non-Catholic charity and philanthropy, so that this confirmation carries considerable weight of practical experience.

ments in education to-day concentrate on this point, how to arrange the school course so that it passes naturally and with the least possible waste into the industrial life. For it is the misfit between school and life which has too often made school a preparation for unskilled labour and unemployment."

## CHAPTER V.

### AN AWAKENING—THE FIRST BOUCHARD DEBATE

The demand for an attendance law broke out afresh in the autumn of 1917 in several places in the province by a sort of spontaneous regeneration. It is difficult to trace any connection between the different demands, which seem to have arisen quite independently; but it is not so difficult to trace the motivating cause behind much of this recrudescence; it surely is to be found in the world awakening aftermath of the war. Everywhere people realized that an intensified competition between nations and within nations was sure to follow the war for many years, and that a tremendous effort in industry, commerce and agriculture would be necessary to make up for the terrible loss by wanton destruction. In this period of reconstruction, science and training would put the nation which was best prepared to use them at a great advantage. It was also realized that those who had suffered in the trenches to save freedom to the world would never be contented to come back to existing social conditions, particularly as applied to childhood. Equality of opportunity seemed the evident corollary of equality in sacrifice.

Human life was at a premium, and there was a quickening of men's consciences as to the need of preserving and training the children of all future generations.

As those who were interested in education stopped to think how within the last generation compulsory attendance laws had been enacted in one country after another, in one province after another, while all the self-governing parts of the British Empire had compulsory laws except Quebec and Newfoundland, the great and crying need of some measure of emancipation for childhood in this province that would put education at the disposal of all, lay heavy on the hearts of reformers. This conviction was strengthened by the agitation which was then nearing its consummation in England.

The branches of the Workers' Educational Association all over England were discussing plans for the development of national education. This wide basis of discussion and agreement made the resulting recommendations a prophetic document. The Fisher Act of 1918 was soon to put on the statute books of England the recognition of the greater educational needs of the future, by removing the last obstacles to universal elementary training, and providing for its continuation on broad and humane social lines. The fact that England in the throes of the war was already planning to give the

youth of the future a new charter of freedom by means of compulsory Continuation Schools, stirred the imagination and the admiration of the whole world of educationists. A similar bill was introduced as a project for study in the French Chamber of Deputies in March 1917, which proposed to make this education compulsory for boys in France up to the age of 20. Continuation education, compulsory for all who did not attend High School, was the ideal set before the world in these two bills. It had a reflex action on educationists in Quebec by making them realize that despite all the progress of recent years we had not taken the first step towards this ideal of universal training for life-work and for citizenship by insuring a minimum of elementary education for every child, while a large class of children in Montreal was absolutely ignored by the school law itself.

The Catholic School Board of Drummondville, under the active lead of M. Nap. Garceau, who had for years been known as an ardent friend of the cause, started the ball rolling which was so soon to grow to large dimensions. This board unanimously passed a resolution on September 21st, 1917, asking the Provincial Government to amend the school law by granting cities, towns and villages with a population of more than 1,000 the right to make school attendance compulsory for all children between 7 and 14

years, by a simple resolution of the school board. This petition was sent to the Provincial Government and to the Council of Public Instruction as well as to other school boards, with a request for support on the part of boards. At a special session of the St. Jerome Board, held on October 23rd, a similar resolution was passed, under the lead of M. J.-Edouard Prévost, M.P. for Terrebonne and a member of the Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction.

As far back as 1897 M. Garceau had delivered a public address in Montreal before the Cercle St. Césaire, in which he had advocated a compulsory law. Since 1900 in Drummondville he has stood for the same principle. In 1915 at the Convention of the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce of the Province of Quebec, held at Sorel, he had this question put on the list for discussion, but the Federation decided the question was not in order.

When the letter from the Drummondville Board came before the Montreal Central Catholic School Commission, the latter body decided to leave the request on the table. Although the general consensus of opinion seemed to be favourable to such a law, the commissioners felt they could not help their confreres at Drummondville for the present. The reasons given were that in taking over several small boards the Central Commission was undertaking heavy responsibilities in the



way of new schools and increased expenditure, and it would not be wise to accede to the request until they were sure they could seat all the pupils.

The Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers took the matter up at its Convention held early in October, without knowing of the action of the Board of Drummondville. A resolution was passed unanimously and forwarded to the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction, and a committee on School Attendance was appointed to make a survey of the attendance situation and the child labour law. It was also given power to carry on a campaign in the name of the Provincial Association. This resolution reads as follows:

“Whereas it is certain that a considerable portion of the children of the Province receive little or no schooling;

“Whereas a very large percentage of children who are enrolled in the first grade never continue beyond the fourth grade; whereas the means now available of dealing with the problem of truancy, and of forcing inefficient and careless parents to send their children to school regularly are quite inadequate;

“Whereas every other province of the Dominion now has a compulsory education law;

“Whereas it is a well established fact that irregular attendance at school and truancy are among the chief factors that lead to juvenile crime;

“Whereas there is reason to believe that after the war competition will be keener, efficiency for life work more essential, and a higher educational standard more necessary than ever before;

“It is the opinion of this convention of Protestant Teachers of Quebec that steps should be taken at once to secure a measure of compulsory education in this province; and that the laws dealing with the employment of children should be revised to prevent the employment of children who have not passed a certain scholastic standard.”

This resolution came before the meeting of the Protestant Committee on November 30th, when, on the motion of Hon. Sydney Fisher, seconded by Prof. J. A. Dale, a similar resolution, with the omission of the third clause regarding the other provinces, was passed unanimously and forwarded to the Government.

When the School Attendance Committee was ready to begin its work of active propaganda, it was considered wise, in view of the violent prejudices which this measure had stirred up in the past, to issue a general

manifesto to the public, setting forth the aims of the Committee. This manifesto was given out in both French and English and published in many papers. Some such statement was necessary, as the speech of Sir Lomer Gouin in 1912 had affirmed that one half of the community could hardly expect to secure a law applicable to itself alone. Co-operation of Catholics and Protestants was necessary. This manifesto ended in an appeal to all parties interested to work together for an attendance law on the basis of the present dual system. The conditions laid down in that manifesto seem to have secured the almost unanimous approval of the English speaking people of Quebec; yet it may not be out of place to quote certain parts. "Why should not Roman Catholics and Protestants unite in an effort to bring about a reform that would be of benefit to both without interfering with the character of the religious instruction given in the schools of either party? . . . So long as the provincial educational systems are working in conformity with the wishes of the people in the provinces concerned, or are capable of being reformed from within, there can be made out no real case for a change from the present system of autonomy in education. . . . As a matter of fact in most large countries education is a provincial and not a federal matter. In almost no country where there are distinct

differences of religion or of language can we find so-called national schools. . . The School Attendance Committee begs to emphasize the necessity of educationalists doing nothing that will arouse distrust or suspicion of their cause. The Protestant friends of an attendance law must show the Roman Catholic friends of such a reform that the Protestant reformers have no ulterior motives. And everyone of us must ask ourselves the question fairly whether it is better to work for educational reforms that now seem within the realm of practical politics or to advocate wild schemes that will only cause antagonisms in our province. The Protestant Teachers, believing that an attendance law can be obtained in Quebec, are prepared to work in harmony with Roman Catholic fellow-citizens and to bend all their energies towards the one task in obtaining an attendance law within the present system." This manifesto was sent out on May 15th, 1918.

At about the same time that the Provincial Association of Teachers appointed this committee, in October, 1917, the Provincial Association of Protestant School Boards and Trustees passed a resolution in favor of an attendance law. This was presented by the President of that Association, Mr. Harry Bragg, to the Protestant Committee at its meeting on November 30th, 1917.

In the autumn of 1917, Dr. J. T. Finnie

again championed the cause for which he had fought so valiantly in 1912; he spoke before the Women's Club of Montreal in the Y.M.C.A., with all his old determination and vigour. But soon after he withdrew from politics to accept the position of Collector of Internal Revenue. The Protestants owe a very deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Finnie for keeping the cause alive during the long period of wandering in the wilderness, when the promised land seemed very far off, and when the championship of this cause in public effectually blocked the door to political advancement. It was his darling hope to be able to secure a measure of compulsory attendance for English speaking children. When he brought in his bill, his friends left him in the lurch in large numbers; as he expressed it, his guns had been spiked. Some politicians are always listening with their ears to the ground for fear they will hear a noise; on the least sound they are ready to run. There are only a few who hitch their waggon to the guiding star of some lofty principle and drive on through storm and wind. Such an one was Dr. Finnie. His Scotch determination stood him in good stead, and he refused to withdraw the bill when urged to do so. If he did not succeed, the fault was not his. He reached out for the fruit which we shall enjoy, and if in his day the time was not ripe for it to be plucked, still he deserves great credit for the effort. What he aspired

to do but could not, should comfort him. For

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp,  
Or what's a heaven for?"

A noble cause is never for long without a leader. Even before Dr. Finnie had given up his seat, a new champion had arisen in St. Hyacinthe. This was the second time that St. Hyacinthe had given a man to lead the vanguard of this movement. M. Bouchard had supported the principle in 1912 and would have voted for the bill if the Protestant deputies had shown any unanimity. In March, 1916, M. Bouchard spoke before the Reform Club in Montreal on education, taking as his subject, "Liberals and Public Instruction in Quebec." He then proclaimed himself a follower of the tradition of Mercier and Marchand and referred particularly to the speech of Mercier in June, 1881, from which we have quoted at length. He dealt with his subject from the historical standpoint without trying to flatter provincial pride by making believe we had reached the summit of perfection. His purpose was merely to show what the Liberals had done when in power to improve education; his comparison was between the present state and what it once had been, without particular reference to the future. Yet his interest in securing important reforms was very apparent also. With regard to compulsory education he spoke as follows: "The mere fact of pronouncing these



words before a certain class of persons who have never read a law of compulsory education, who do not even know exactly what these ideas represent, who are ignorant of the fact that compulsory education exists almost everywhere in civilized countries, would render you suspected of bad intentions against religion. If you could speak to them of the reform for which compulsory education is the preparation, without pronouncing the word reform or compulsion, they would immediately approve; they would admit willingly that the child has a right to be taught; that fathers have the duty to have their children taught; that the state ought to aid education; that there are parents who culpably neglect to have their children taught; that our children can not possibly receive bad teaching in our schools in which religion is the basis of education. They will declare that it is supremely desirable that not a single child should be deprived of the education given at school, and that if one could find a law which would attain that end, it would be an excellent law. Nevertheless this law must not be one of compulsory education; for they are afraid of these words, which represent only certain ideas which they have. Compulsory education is certainly a desirable reform and it will come in time, but it is not so urgent as is claimed by certain people who allow themselves to be fascinated over-



much by words. It ought to be established when the population, and those who have charge of education, understand that there is nothing subversive in it, and that it is in the interest of education that it should be put into force. In as much and as long as these persons are arrayed against it, it would be better not to pass it, for it would be to adopt a law which would remain a dead letter on our statutes, and we have enough of these laws which exist only on paper. However, ideas are moving on this subject." This speech shows his growing interest in education, and we will note how his point of view changes about the importance and feasibility of such a law.

M. Bouchard has told several times in public that his eyes were first opened to see the deficiencies in our education by reading in one of the reports of the Superintendent, that there were more girls between the ages of 7 and 14 years enrolled in schools than there were girls of these ages living in the province at the time, according to the school census. At first he thought this was an error in printing, but on searching other reports he found the same conditions. To account for this miracle, he asked if some one had been ransacking the cemeteries. It was discoveries like these which caused him to make an intensive study of the school statistics, and when he did study the reports, he found that

the state of education was not such as to justify the cry so often heard, of "Honour to the Province of Quebec."

Long before M. Bouchard brought up the matter of educational reforms in the Legislature in January, 1918, the fact of his intentions had become known and was announced in all the newspapers. When he did make his speech on January 31st, public interest had been thoroughly aroused and his words found a place on the front page of many newspapers. It was evident at once that much water had flowed past the ancient citadel since 1912; at least the current was less turbid. M. Bouchard was listened to with rapt attention and often applauded by the House. He advocated several far-reaching reforms, an attendance law being one of the most important. He had a vigorous and determined way which showed his own conviction and brought conviction to others, and made the whole House think and weigh his words carefully. He was known from the day he was first elected in 1912 as a Liberal of the old school who did not hide his principles under a bushel or seek preferment by the primrose path of servile obeisance. An ardent supporter of the Government and an admirer of the Prime Minister, still the be-all and the end-all of his going to the Legislature did not seem to be to prevent the Government from being embarrassed. He was prepared to

stand up before the House and preach a gospel which he knew was suspect in many quarters, and to advocate a reform which he knew would not be adopted for some time to come.

He brought up the matter that January afternoon on a motion for an order of the House for copies of resolutions of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada regarding Technical Education, Uniformity of Books and Compulsory Education, and copies of all resolutions of school boards and other public bodies asking the Government to establish compulsory education in certain municipalities. He complimented the Government on the great progress made in the last few years but his own demands for reforms were no less sweeping. He said he wished the deputies to have as much control of education as did the bishops in the Council of Public Instruction. "We have a system of schools that may be said to appeal to a population largely Catholic, and that is perhaps ideal from that point of view. However, even if we have such an ideal system, we should not cease in this House to give our attention to education." He said he wished to see some modifications in the Council of Public Instruction. "There are committees of the Legislative Assembly on agriculture, on private bills, and on everything else, and there should be a committee of deputies charged to study educational matters as part of the Council of Public

Instruction. It was a mistake that this did not exist. The public inquired what the deputies did in regard to education, and why, if the high cost of living was inquired into, the high cost of text books should not be subject to inquiry." He noted that the matter of Leaving Certificates had been before the Council since 1911, and remarked, "I do not think it should take ten years for the Council to decide a question of certificates. If we added to the Council a number of deputies equal to the number of bishops, we would put the Assembly in touch with the question of public instruction. And I say the time has come when the Legislative Assembly should pay more attention to education than in the past." With reference to compulsory education he said he believed a great change of opinion had taken place within the last twenty years. "No one to-day can dispute the right of the child to have at least a minimum of education. The civil code provides that the father and mother shall raise the child; but the civil code does not go far enough. It should provide that the father and mother in addition to the duty of looking after the material needs of the child should also have the duty of looking after the intellectual side."

This debate aroused considerable public interest and discussion. The French papers showed a great deal more interest in M. Bouchard's speech than did those of the

English section. One could readily see then that during the years of silence the heaven had been working in public opinion. There was a far greater disposition to accept reforms in education than ever before. *Le Canada* remarked that the principle of M. Bouchard's reforms was approved by the great majority, and "that only the application of them remains a question of opportunity and conciliation." *La Patrie* remarked that a school attendance law might be difficult to enforce in the case of real indigence, but in other cases it would assuredly be a beneficial measure; and it quoted figures to show the need of such a measure. *Le Devoir* neither approved nor disapproved, taking a neutral attitude for the time being. Of course, the clerical paper of Quebec, now called *L'Action Catholique*, opposed, and began a regular campaign against M. Bouchard. It certainly did him a great injustice by imputing motives which he had distinctly repudiated. In every thing he said, it seemed as if *L'Action Catholique* was looking for some *arrière pensée*. Over and over again this paper has accused him of advocating national schools and the abolition of religious teaching, when the facts are the very opposite.

The debate in the Legislature was continued on February 6th, by M. Francoeur, who, while not personally in favour of a compulsory law unless it was found to be

absolutely necessary, was much disposed to educational reforms in general. He wished for a fair discussion of the matters raised, and expressed his regret that some people had found it necessary to employ political and religious camouflage in depicting the motives of those who discussed public questions, particularly in the case of those who advocated reforms in education. The application of his remarks seemed quite evident. He did not agree with M. Bouchard about the need of compulsion, but he was quite in favour of the Assembly taking more part in the discussion of education, and suggested a permanent sub-committee of the House to study important questions with a sub-committee of the Catholic Committee.

M. Sauvé, Leader of the Opposition, objected to the law because the consciences of the parents might be violated thereby; just how this could happen in Quebec where there are separate schools and all Catholic schools are religious schools, was not explained. Surely no one is naive enough to think that the *conscience* of any parent who was obliged to send his child to the school of his choice for two or three years longer than usual would be violated thereby. Some have pleaded that the parent has a right to withdraw a child from school when he might choose, but no one ever before suggested that the conscience of any Catholic in Quebec could be



offended if he was obliged to send his child to the school of his own religious faith. Such a statement will show that many of the arguments are borrowed from France, and in many cases the borrowers do not stop to think if they apply or not.

Hon. Jérémie Décarie spoke for the Government and said he did not believe in the need of compulsory education for Quebec. He quoted official figures to show that Quebec occupied second place among the provinces of the Dominion as regards attendance. It was seldom that parents did not understand the necessity of giving their children an education. This speech of M. Décarie's dealt with statistics in the major key; his tone had changed by next February when he spoke on the same subject in quite the minor key.

M. Bouchard seemed to have been waiting for just such an apology. He turned on these statistics and rent them into shreds. This was the beginning of the exposure of the fallacy of using the per cent. of attendance to get a comparative idea of the amount of schooling received by the children in the different provinces. He showed how the figures on attendance in Quebec are based on the ages of 5 to 16, while in Ontario they are from the ages of 5 to 21; the comparison did not show that in Ontario it would even include university students. He asked how comparisons could be of any value when they were



made on such different bases. Then he quoted the figures of enrolment for the Catholic schools of the province, which started off with 150,000 in the first year and dwindled down to a little over 2,000 in the eighth year. In Montreal there were 25,000 pupils in the first year; 13,000 in the second; only 5,000 in the fourth; 2,000 in the fifth; 1,700 in the sixth; 1,019 in the seventh and about 500 in the eighth. "These figures should make this House consider," cried M. Bouchard. And he might have quoted similarly convincing figures from the Protestant schools. He pointed out that the Montreal School Board had asked to be relieved of taking a school census, and asked how it could be that the statistics were established on a sound basis, when there were none for the largest city in the Dominion.

M. Bouchard followed up the campaign by vigorous and fiery articles week after week in his paper, *Le Clairon*; and these articles were reproduced in many other papers. He accepted several invitations to speak on the subject before public meetings. One of the first occasions on which he ever made a regular speech in English was at Cowansville in March before the School Boards' Association of the District of Bedford. A few weeks later he gave the same address before the Headmasters' Association in Montreal. For appearing before Protestant associations he was criticized by some of his irreconcilable

opponents, who took this occasion to try to discredit him in the eyes of his own people. But surely it is most unfair to accuse a political opponent of trickery if he accepts an invitation to discuss publicly the issues of the day on which he has very definite ideas, with persons of another faith, but equally interested in those issues. How can these questions be brought to a just and reasonable solution without such exchange of opinion? It is an easy matter to find an occasion for petty recriminations when one has the will.

During the summer he held several meetings in his own county of St. Hyacinthe on Sundays after the Mass. When speaking at the village of St. Jude's, unexpected opposition suddenly offered itself. When he began to mention school reforms, the parish priest promptly ordered him and the crowd to leave the church property. He refused to go and went on with his speech. At that moment the church bell began to strike the hour of noon under the daylight saving regulation, and M. Bouchard hailed the omen; the bells were inaugurating a new era in politics as well.

## CHAPTER VI.

### REPORT OF THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION OF PROTESTANT TEACHERS.

The campaign opened again in the autumn with the broadside fired off at the Convention of the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers. Before the report of the School Attendance Committee was made public, it was presented to Sir Lomer Gouin in October; in this interview with the Premier the School Attendance Committee had the support of representatives from the Board of Trade, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Rotary Club, as well as of Professor Dale, who made a powerful presentation. In November the *Bonne Entente* between the two School Boards of Montreal made a distinct step forward when the Roman Catholic School Commission received and heard a delegation of teachers. This delegation was introduced by Rev. Dr. Dickie, Chairman of the Protestant School Board. The printed report of the School Attendance Committee was presented to the Catholic Commissioners and they were requested to study the facts and figures contained therein. A reference was made to the fact that in 1909 the same Board had pronounced in favour of the compulsory

principle. Later on a committee of the Catholic Board was appointed to study the matter. There was considerable misunderstanding at the time as to the purpose of the teachers in going before the Catholic Board ; one paper said it was glad to note that the teachers had been repulsed. The visit was meant as a compliment ; the report contained important information which was soon to be made public and would be of interest to school commissioners. The members of the Protestant Board had already received copies of the report, and it was wished to present it to the other Board before it was made public. The sole request made was that the question should be studied. The visit created some friendly comment in the press ; one paper said : "This overture on the part of the Protestant School Board should give us something to think about, and at the same time it is evident proof of the good faith and good wishes of the dissentient commissioners. . . . We say this conduct ought to make us reflect and admire their sincerity in the cause they are defending as well as the devotion with which they serve that cause." Now that a history is being written which aims at being comprehensive, it is time to disclose a fact which is not generally known. When the School Attendance Committee wished to make this visit, it sought the advice of friends. The details of this visit were thought out by a

prominent Catholic priest interested in the reform—one who had taken no part in the subsequent campaign. He suggested that the teachers should get the co-operation of the Chairman of the Protestant Board and have him act as sponsor on that occasion. The suggestions he gave were followed almost to the letter.

The report of the School Attendance Committee brought to light certain facts which had never before been collected. Quebec had a high percent of average attendance, and yet thousands of children of school age were obviously leaving school very young. The Committee began to investigate these points carefully. With reference to the first it was soon discovered that the percent of average attendance is not computed in the same manner in the different provinces, nor is it based on the same factors. It therefore provides no reasonable basis of comparison. The Quebec method seems absolutely unique, being reckoned on part of the school year only, namely, that part of it for which each individual school happens to be open before the Inspector's visit. This visit may occur at any time from January to June, but is seldom later than May. The Quebec average gains by taking no account of the short attendance of pupils who (1) begin school after this visit ; (2) drop out of school after this visit ; (3) attend short term schools ;

as the average attendance is based upon the number of days which the individual school happens to be open, irrespective of the length of the school year. There are still a few four-months' schools and quite a few six-months' schools in Quebec among the Protestant schools. Quebec has a fourth advantage over Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan; in these provinces the school year for statistical purposes begins with the month of January, while children generally begin their school life in September, and the course of study is made to correspond to this fact. Children who begin in September will make a small percent of attendance by the end of the statistical year in December. During all subsequent discussions no single point of these facts has been or can be questioned or gain-said. The friends of the status quo could only ignore them and trust to luck that they were not brought too prominently before the public.

To show how many children were out of school a comparison was made between the Federal census of 1911, and the School census and enrolment of the school year 1910-11. The school census showed 450,619 children between 5 and 16, and of these 386,496 were enrolled; the Federal census showed there were really 521,040 children of these ages, while the average attendance of these same children worked out even in our



method, which gives us so many advantages, showed only 299,770 in attendance. Of the total school age population there were 134,544 not enrolled and 221,270 out of school on the average every day the schools were open. These figures took no account of the short term of some schools.\*

During the discussion at the Teachers' Convention other very damaging facts were brought forward with reference to the enrolment and the census. In certain years there were actually more children enrolled (7 to 14 years of age) than there were children of these ages according to the census ; this was true not merely of certain districts but of the province as a whole. Such a discovery was quite enough to discredit official figures, which taken at their face value had always seemed to imply that Quebec had no attendance problem. Another comparison was made between the Federal census and School census for the ages 7 to 14. The School census showed only 7,102 children of these ages out

* AGES.	DOMINION CENSUS.	SCHOOL CENSUS.	ENROLMENT	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE.
5-7	106,772	92,808	72,320	....
7-14	328,959	290,174	283,072	....
14-16	85,309	67,637	31,104	....
Totals	521,040	450,619	386,496	299,770

The enrolment and attendance figures include the children in all the public schools, the classical colleges and practically all the private schools, for these ages. Practically all the children of these ages attending school anywhere in the province are included.



of school ; the more comprehensive figures showed there really had been 45,837 children who never entered school. A similar comparison, with the Federal census of 1901 for the ages of 5 to 16, showed that there were 122,000 unenrolled and 204,000 out of school every day they were open. In 1911 these numbers had increased to 134,544 and 221,270 respectively. During this decade while great progress had been made in educational facilities, it was quite evident that they were not being used as fully as they might.

In all this analysis the members of the School Attendance Committee had made an effort to get behind the official figures and to test them. Earlier reformers had been obliged to rely on official statistics, and by means of them if taken at their nominal value without discount, it had been easy to make out a *prima facie* case for letting well enough alone. Such criticism of official figures and methods as was contained in this report, had to come from those actively engaged in teaching, and it might never have been worked out by politicians. Indeed, some politicians had been so ignorant as to imagine the percent of attendance meant the ratio between the census and the attendance, whereas it always means the ratio between enrolment and attendance. Half the children in a district might be unenrolled and yet the percent of attendance would betray no clue to this.

M. Tellier, leader of the Opposition, had remarked during the debate on the Finnie Bill, that "we have 77½% of our children attending school, while in Ontario the percent is only 61%." No progress could be made until such ignorance as this was shown up and exposed to wither in the light of common sense. So long as the percent of attendance was not subjected to careful analysis, such a happy state of ignorance was possible, even in the front seats in the Legislature.

A table was worked out to show the difference in elimination in the upper grades between compulsory and voluntary systems of attendance. The comparison is most striking between Nova Scotia and Quebec. The enrolment of the second year is taken as a basis in both cases. In the fourth year Nova Scotia has still 93% of the number, Quebec has 82.5%; in the fifth, Nova Scotia has 84.2%, Quebec has 60.1% ; in the sixth year the figures are 71.8% and 37.4% respectively; in the seventh year they are 51.8% and 22.1%, while Nova Scotia has still another year in the elementary course, with 40.9% in it ; if Quebec had such a grade she would have about 15% here. The enrolment figures in the Protestant schools alone were equally distressing. In the first year of the elementary course there were 14,756 children enrolled in 1916, in the second year 8,843, and by the time the sixth year was reached there

were only 4,610 left, and 3,756 in the seventh year. For the Protestant schools a comparison was made with the United States. The experience tables of the U.S. Bureau of Education show that out of every 1,000 children who started school 12 years ago, 111 should graduate from High School. In Quebec the course in the Protestant schools is of 11 years ; of the children who started 11 years ago, only 44 out of every thousand were found enrolled in the 11th year, and of course not all of these would graduate.

At the Convention certain unpleasant figures were quoted from the bulletins of the Federal census, showing the school attendance in cities. Out of 64 cities in Canada with a population of 5,000 or more, Montreal stood in the unenviable position of sixty-first, with 23.19% of the children from 7 to 14 years of age who did not enter school in the year 1910. The only other cities with a higher percentage of children not attending school were Berlin (Kitchener), Glace Bay, and North Vancouver. The first seven cities on the list were from Ontario. Forty-five per cent. of the cities of Ontario were among the first twenty names. The first city in the Province of Quebec was Westmount with 12.24% of its children out of school. Lachine came next with the rank of twenty, Levis was in the twenty-third place, Sorel in the twenty-ninth, St. Hyacinthe thirtieth. Of the ten

cities on this list with a school enrolment of 5,000 or more, Quebec City stood seventh and Montreal last. The complete list of these ten in order is as follows : Ottawa, Halifax, St. John, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Quebec, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Montreal.

Sir William Peterson spoke of the possible developments of universal education, taking as examples the Fisher Act and the Report, just out, of a Commission on Adult Education in England. The Ministry of Reconstruction had appointed this Commission, presided over by the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, to deal with the education of the adult, especially the young workman who does not wake up till he is out of his teens to the advantages of mental training. It had not progressed far in its work before it discovered that it would be impossible to consider the problem set them apart from the social and industrial conditions which determine to a large degree the opportunities, the interests and the general outlook of men and women. The Committee became convinced that this economic frame work must be modified before anything like a satisfactory system could be worked out. After outlining the findings of this committee, Sir William showed how far behind Quebec was in the educational competition of the twentieth century.

Senator Dandurand had taken an interest in the work of the School Attendance Com-

mittee from the day when the manifesto was launched in May. He was asked to speak at this Convention and he readily consented. One particular remark of his at this meeting caused a generous burst of applause : "Catholic South America and Protestant North America have unanimously adopted this remedy to cure the evil from which we suffer. Quebec almost alone in the whole world stands out, and she has sought to apply other remedies in vain. It can not be that we alone are right against the whole world." He complimented the School Attendance Committee on their report and expressed the hope that it would open the eyes of the leaders in Quebec. He announced in closing that he proposed to carry on the good work by undertaking a campaign among his own people. Such a promise was a sufficient reward for the School Attendance Committee for all its long labours. And it serves to bring us back to the campaign on the French side.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A PLAN OF CAMPAIGN—ABBÉ DUBOIS.

The origin of the movement among the French Canadians, one of momentous influence on education both now and for years to come, must be traced in considerable detail. It is largely by the accumulation of details that an English reader can best grasp the significance of the whole movement and the stir it created, as well as the evident and sudden change in point of view. Probably nothing has so thoroughly aroused French Canadian thought, and stirred its leaders to action, since the day when Cartier won the support of his people for the project of Confederation. That the active leader of this movement was to be a priest, fell like a bomb shell in the midst of public opinion. From the day when the first article for compulsory attendance appeared in *La Presse*, it became evident that henceforth the old Latin maxim would apply, *solvitur ambulando*. Much of the work that remains to be done is to keep people walking. This volume is meant as a modest attempt to keep matters on the move by spreading the good news. It is particularly interesting to trace for English readers a movement which was in its inception and working out the product of a French Canadian



educationist who had long pondered on this problem.

This particular campaign had very modest beginnings in most unexpected quarters. At first it seemed to attract little public attention. A desultory series of letters came out in September, 1918, in *Le Devoir*. A committee of educationists and Catholic citizens had been at work in Montreal for some time examining the course of study in collaboration with a sub-committee of the Catholic committee. M. P.-E. Lamarche wrote an open letter in *Le Devoir* to M. Gaspard Deserres, chairman of this committee, to ask about the progress that was being made in the revision. M. Lamarche was a well-known Nationalist, who early in the war resigned his seat at Ottawa as a protest against a dying Parliament prolonging its life beyond the allotted span by means of artificial respiration. His interest in educational reforms caused a little flutter in educational circles, and Abbé Maurice, Visitor of Schools for the East Division, set him a series of posers in another open letter. M. Lamarche replied on Sept. 24th in a letter in which he definitely pledged himself to the cause of reform in the course of study ; he frankly stated that he "saw nothing incompatible in the idea of modernizing teaching methods, unless one were to claim that these have no other characteristic than their antiquity." He emphasized the new



needs in education created by the war and mentioned what is so often denied, that the farmer needs more education to-day to run his farm according to approved methods, to do business through a bank or with a mail order store in Toronto or Chicago, than did the farmer of a few generations ago who was almost self-supporting. He mentioned no less than twelve respects in which the course of study, in his opinion, might be modernized. He had indeed left the beaten path. There were others who wished for reforms and did not believe that a revision of the course of study was the only matter demanding attention. *Le Devoir* did not see fit to publish the ideas of such reformers, and the exchange of opinion seemed at an end. But zealous reformers are not apt to be turned aside by a single rebuff. An opportunity was sought to put these views before the public in another paper which received the offer with open arms. *La Presse* is heartily to be congratulated for the campaign it conducted last winter for improving education in Quebec, and particularly for championing the cause of compulsory education.

The pioneer to break open this new path was Abbé Nazaire Dubois, Visitor of Schools for the Centre Division. Before he became an advocate of an attendance law, *L'Action Catholique* might with some show of truth say as each new advocate arose and was

eventually lost to sight, that it was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. By the splendid lead of this devoted educationist the wilderness was quickly populated. He threw up a highway in the desert over which he and his friends might walk boldly and without fear of reproach or molestation.

When the general history of education in Quebec comes to be written, great honour will be given therein to the name of Abbé Dubois. Popular imagination was waiting to be stirred on the question of school attendance, and yet it seemed as if the trusted leaders were waiting to be led rather than to lead. A bold prophet with burning zeal and frank fearlessness was needed to speak forth the truth in high places. Such an one was found in the Visitor of Schools for the Centre Division. Like the prophet-herdsman from Tekoa he rudely called down woe on those who were taking their ease amid the changing events of world-history, and were putting off the day when the real educational issue would have to be faced. While our leaders were satisfied with the deceptive glamour of our per cent. of attendance, this truth-teller came forth into the arena of public debate and forced the issue into the open. His cloth stood him in good stead ; here was a man who could not be denounced as either a radical or a heretic or a lunatic, and his arguments had to be faced.

For eleven years Abbé Dubois was Prin-

cial of the Jacques Cartier Normal School in Montreal, the largest Catholic Normal School in the Province, and one that traces back its origin to the year 1857. For three years he had served his apprenticeship there under Abbé Verreau, who had been Principal for over forty years. As a teacher and later on as Principal, Abbé Dubois won a splendid reputation and was able to exert an influence over hundreds of young teachers who were preparing to enter the profession. In 1912 he was persuaded to give up this position to become Visitor of Schools. Besides this work, he has lately been a member of that committee of Montreal educationists who are examining the course of study. Abbé Dubois is to-day known right across Canada among Catholic teachers, and his championship of compulsory attendance in Quebec has enhanced rather than lessened this reputation.

The first report which Abbé Dubois presented after he became Visitor of Schools, caused no little stir in September, 1913, because of its frank statement on the matter of attendance, together with statistics. We will quote what he says about the total number of children : "What is the exact number of children who have received instruction in the different schools of the Commission ? It is difficult to determine. In the first place we must set aside the simple enrolment, which might lead us into an error because many

children move from one school to another during the course of the year, and this fact increases the enrolment. In the second place it is difficult because a considerable number of children after being enrolled attend school only a few days or a few weeks and then finally desert their class. On the other hand the pupils who have to take a position in the spring to gain a living, after having followed the course for several months, have really received instruction in the schools of the Commission." Then he quotes the figures and tells how he has arranged them, "You will note the numerical strength of the first two years ; in the first two years alone there are almost 12,000 (11,994) or 60.2%. . . . . I like to compare the classes of the first two years to a large lake into which the waters of ignorance have been diverted, to remain stagnant there for a considerable time, for too long, perhaps. Are there dykes which retain these abundant waters and which permit them to flow away only in tiny rivulets to join the stream of knowledge of the model course, or to the academy course, which is indeed the unknown ocean on which at present the great majority of the children of the common people never sail ? One must undoubtedly avoid exaggeration, but one may ask why the children are so numerous in the first few years and why they are so few in the latter years. What becomes of all the children after the

second and third years of the course of study ? Do the waters of the great lake remain so long stagnant that a great evaporation takes place before they are put in movement ? We are face to face with a problem for which I for my part have not the complete solution. Next year I shall try to find out what has become of the pupils of the school year which has just terminated."

We here see the seeker after truth who is not afraid to look unpleasant facts full in the face, and is searching with an open mind for an efficient remedy. He was so sure of the answer in 1918 that he was prepared to tell the public what was causing the waters of the great lake to evaporate. And the reason which he had discovered was not merely local but was the general problem of all Montreal schools. His predecessors and confreres, too, had noted the same evaporation. Abbé Perrier had said in 1909 : "As one can see from these figures, our children leave school far too soon. These statistics prove that the majority of our children leave the benches of the school before the fourth year. It is heart-breaking." In an address before the Congress of the Association of School Commissioners in 1915, Abbé Dupuis had said : "I have besought the children of the third year to come back the next year for the fourth grade, and those of the fourth to come back in the same way for the next grade, and so on.

It would be necessary to go down on one's knees before the children and very often before the parents to obtain this result, as if an education were not the richest capital and the most precious heritage." It was an easy matter to diagnose the symptoms but it took considerably more courage to prescribe and justify a rigorous course of treatment.

This series of articles in *La Presse* was carefully planned and well advertised in advance, so that the readers were attracted and ready long before the important interviews appeared. *La Presse* outlined in a preliminary article the details of the school system and told of the work of the committee in Montreal that was going over the course of study. It promised a series of articles by noted educationists who would give their views on the question of how to adapt our teaching to the needs revealed by the war. It was mildly hinted in this preliminary article that modifications in the course of study were not the only things needed. The series was planned to begin in the palace of the Archbishop with an article by Mgr. Roy, who was then Chairman of the Central School Commission. He regretted in his interview that certain educational establishments did not receive more encouragement, and said he was pleased with the adoption of uniformity of textbooks in all the schools of the Commission. Next came one or two articles demand-



ing more attention to scientific study and technical education. Then Abbé Dubois launched his clarion call that "The Desertion of Our Schools is an Evil which Must be Remedied Immediately." He supported his contention with statistics which spoke loudly. To quote : "I admit the evident progress which has been made in the choice of text books, in the spread of better methods of teaching and in the general organization. There is, however, a great evil from which we are suffering ; the too early disappearance of a great number of children from our primary schools. Here is a fact which can be easily established by the evidence of other witnesses than myself and by statistics." He goes on to quote from the reports of Abbé Perrier and his confrere, Abbé Maurice. The former had said in 1909-10 that the course of study seems bloated and ambitious ; he was quite ready to grant that school life was too short and consequently the child was too young to assimilate the course of study. Criticism has been directed against Abbé Dubois for using the statements and figures of others instead of his own ; it should have been quite evident that he was using the evidence of unprejudiced witnesses, who had never advocated a compulsory law. This whole article was moderate in tone ; no one was attacked or refuted, and the remedy was left rather to suggest itself to the reader. The reporter partly filled up



what was not explicit by reflections of his own, in which he advocated a great campaign among the parents to encourage them to send their children longer to school. He definitely said a compulsory law was a necessity and that while the individual parents had rights, so too had the community. Then and there *La Presse* definitely pledged itself ; and from that day *La Presse* has never wavered in its loyal support. At the close of his article Abbé Dubois links up this campaign with the one for reform in the course of study : "A revision in the course of study has been contemplated. As a matter of fact with the uncertain attendance at our primary schools, we shall always have the difficulty of putting a little of everything into the course for the first few years, drowning perhaps essentials by secondary matters. It would be much easier to draw up a more reasonable programme of studies if we could count on six or seven years' attendance at the primary school."

The campaign went merrily on day after day ; certain Radicals asked not merely for compulsory education but for a Ministry of education. The first big stone to be thrown came from the hand of one of the officials of the Department of Public Instruction at Quebec, M. C.-J. Magnan, the Inspector-General of Catholic Schools. Years ago when he was one of the professors of the Normal

School at Quebec he wrote a little book entitled, "Honour to the Province of Quebec." In this book he explained the school system and praised it to the skies, as well as the results obtained under it. The whole thing seemed such an obvious attempt to curry favour that it has never ceased to be the butt for ridicule of a certain class of radical reformers. From that day the habit of pointing out the faults of other systems of education and of lauding our own, in season and out of season, has received the name of Magnanism in these same quarters. So common has his name become to denote a certain state of mind that last winter a Montreal paper in a mood of mockery called a woman who denounced M. Bouchard, "Une Magnanne." For several years M. Magnan has edited the educational paper supplied to French teachers, *L'Enseignement Primaire*, and he has often expressed his ideas about reforms in these pages. About six years ago he was appointed Inspector-General, and in this position he has control over about forty inspectors, and sets the pace by which they are to march. In his interview in *La Presse* M. Magnan opposed a compulsory law as being vexatious and ineffectual, and said that the official figures showed our children attended school better than those of other provinces. His views will be dealt with in greater detail later on, but it is necessary to mention them here as they

were touched on so frequently in subsequent articles in *La Presse*.

The second article by Abbé Dubois appeared on December 27th. The former interview had been enticing in tone ; this one was full of indignation. He boldly put his hand on the sore spot of education in Quebec, and denounced the man who apologized for it and tried to explain it away ; yet he never once laid himself open to contradiction. He was quite as well prepared to expound Catholic doctrine as was M. Magnan, a layman. "One is still more surprised to hear M. C.-J. Magnan say in his interview in *La Presse* of Dec. 21st, that according to the statistics furnished by the school inspectors there were in 1916-17 in the Province of Quebec 348,323 children between 7 and 14 years of age, and of this number there were for the same year 330,381, or 94%, enrolled in the schools. M. Magnan since he became Inspector General has presided at different conferences held by the Inspectors, and he can not have forgotten that many Inspectors from the country have complained about the difficulty of obtaining the census of school children from the secretary-treasurers. These same secretary-treasurers used to be content to take the number of school children as a census, making a supposition of the very fact to be proved, that all the children are going to school. That will do for the country. M. Magnan is supposed

to know that in the cities and in Montreal in particular there has never been a census of school children. Only two or three months ago, Hon. Cyrille Delage, Superintendent of Public Instruction, asked the school authorities of Montreal to be so good as to send him the census of school children between 7 and 14 years within the limits of the Catholic School Commission of Montreal, in conformity with Article 2768 of the School Code. . . . Why so much trouble to ignore an evident evil from which we are suffering, the early desertion of our schools by a great number of our children ? . . . M. Magnan in his turn declares there is a falling-off in the cosmopolitan city of Montreal, which can be made to disappear by energetic measures against vagrancy ; and he is indignant to see good men, proprietors of factories and manufacturing plants, come to the platform and demand compulsory education when these are the very ones who in the cities are the cause in part of the absence of a certain number of school children. M. Magnan does not wish compulsory education as a remedy for this evil, and he loudly demands the liberty of fathers of families, the free citizens of a great country. He is indignant at the thought of children being led to school by a constable and of the father being for ever menaced by a new kind of spotter. Does M. Magnan know what real liberty is ? One may well doubt it. To

learn what it is, he might read the life of Garcia Moreno, President of Ecuador and avenger of and martyr to the rights of Christianity." And he goes on to tell how Garcia Moreno passed a law of compulsory education in Ecuador in 1871, with the result that in four years the number of children attending the public schools there was doubled. "M. Magnan does not like penal laws. A law is not bad because it is penal. In reality the penal laws are the ones which form the mentality of a people. The suggestion has been made of undertaking a great campaign to show the people the advantages of education. But people with very simple notions of logic will always reason as follows: there are punishments for the parents who fail to provide for the material needs of the family, and there are none for those who fail to give their children an education. Therefore education is not important. When it was wished to inculcate hygienic ideas in the minds of people, certain punishments were fixed in the enactments against spitting on sidewalks or in public places. Then the people understood the importance of hygiene. Did the fact that certain penal laws concerning the sale of alcohol without a license have been broken, prevent the same laws from being put in the criminal code? What are the penal laws that are not exposed to being broken? That does not prevent them from being of use in

forming the mentality of a people and in repressing the most serious abuses, even if it is necessary to lead a few recalcitrants by the collar. M. Magnan demands educational autonomy for the Province of Quebec. It is just because our province is free that it ought of its own accord to adopt compulsory education to safeguard that autonomy and to conserve our splendid system of separate schools and prevent the establishment of so-called national schools. As a matter of fact the Province of Quebec is the only place or perhaps one of the rare places, not even in North America, but in all the American continent and in all Europe where such a law does not exist, and one would have to be blind not to foresee violent attacks against our province. Besides, this law would be to our benefit ; while instruction is being made more general among our neighbours, why are we to be condemned to inferiority and to be finally obliterated ?”

A comparison between M. Magnan and Abbé Dubois will help to make clearer the point of view of each. M. Magnan turns readily to the past for his inspiration. He finds it easy to apologize for a condition of affairs which he has for years past praised to the skies. Abbé Dubois on the other hand has been inspired by a vision of the new era that is to be, in which equality of educational opportunity and a modicum of training will



be, not merely an ideal laid up in heaven, to be realized in some future state, but a practical policy which can and must be realized here and now in the Province of Quebec for the children of this generation. He has seen that the status of the child is not exhausted by the old Roman notion of *patria potestas*, but has to be modified by the equally true notion that the child also has certain inalienable rights as a future citizen and worker.

Besides these articles of his own, Abbé Dubois sent to *La Presse* long quotations from famous Catholic ecclesiastics, who had expressed themselves in favour of compulsory attendance. Rev. Father A.-D. Sertillanges, a Dominican who is Professor of Moral Philosophy at the Catholic Institute of Paris, in his volume, *La Famille et l'État dans l'Éducation*, published in 1907, expressed the regret that Christian apologists had contested the principle of compulsory attendance. The principle is not unnatural or offensive but excellent and necessary. He claims that the state is fulfilling its role of Promoter of Public Instruction when it applies this principle. If the law of France has not been all that might be wished, the fault is to be sought elsewhere than in the principle. He regrets the unsatisfactory concomitant conditions that exist in France, but his ardent patriotism makes him admit quite explicitly that the progress obtained in France



from compulsory education has been in the best interests of the French people and of France. Another authority quoted was Abbé Paul Vigué, who cited the precedents formed in the middle ages when Church Councils, long before the days of modern Parliaments, passed decrees in favour of compulsory education. He pointed out that a child with no education had less resources to enable him to learn the essentials as well as the details of religious truth, and added that where illiteracy existed, there would be found religious ignorance in no less degree. A statement from Mgr. von Kettler, Bishop of Maintz (or may we not call it Mayence again?), whose opinion is well known as being favourable, was given verbatim in *La Presse*. All these quotations were given word for word with exact references, so that they could be traced. But this list of quotations would not be complete without a statement from some eminent Jesuit to cap the climax. Such a quotation appeared in an anonymous letter in *Le Canada* on March 9th. The author quoted was Rev. T. Meyer, S.J. The quotation is not long and we will give it in the original Latin as well as in an English version : "THESIS LXXVI. Ubi de institutione et interna directione scholarum civilis auctoritas cum ecclesiastica sincere concordat, moderata aliqua legalis disciplina consentiente Ecclesia publice sancita, qua tota puerilis aetas ad usum scholarum effica

citer obligetur, practice omnimodae scholari libertati longe praeferenda est ; ex inverso contrarium potius dicendum ubicumque systema scholare coactivum, tamquam institutio exclusive civilis, illis condicionibus omnino caret." (Instit. Juris, Natural. Vol. 2, page 724). "Wherever the civil authority is in complete agreement with ecclesiastical authority on the matter of the establishment and internal direction of the schools, there a moderate legal discipline, publicly sanctioned by the consent of the Church, by which enactment all the youth would be effectively obliged to go to school, is far preferable to a liberty of attendance that is practically complete. On the contrary, the opposite would have to be held wherever the compulsory school system, being a purely civil institution, entirely lacks these conditions."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES—MAGNANISM.

After the first article by Abbé Dubois early in December, came one by Senator Beique, President of the Executive Council of Laval University, Montreal, who re-echoed the words of the Visitor of Schools, and expressed the hope that *La Presse* would go on with the campaign so well undertaken. He said Abbé Dubois had put his finger on the two sore spots in the educational system, the desertion of the schools and the overloading of the programme. "The time has passed when one could be contented with the mere knowledge of how to read and write; we now need an intensive science and technical education to be able to stand the economic struggle between nations." One of the next interviews came from M. Gonzalve Desaulniers, the President of the Alliance Française of Montreal; he urged three reforms in particular, a Ministry of Education, Compulsory Education and Uniformity of Text-books. The next to receive the fiery cross and carry it on was M. A.-J. de Bray, formerly Director of the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales*. He suggested that the state should take the control of education, making it compulsory and introducing more of homogeneity, so that there

would be continuity from the primary school up to the university. "First of all let me say that we must not be afraid of clearing off the slate all our old methods. The war has taught us things which we ought to take to profit."

This interview from M. de Bray called forth from L'Action Catholique a long editorial. "It is not the function of the state to establish itself as an educator. State control in education is a downright disorder. The immediate and direct right to take charge of education belongs to the parents, the generators and true-born educators of the children. The order of Nature and Divine Providence have ordained that parents should do this for themselves, as well as with the help of representatives, considering it a sacred duty which they are told by the voice of nature they must not avoid, much less may they alienate this primordial right, or be despoiled of it. That is to say, the school is free, and the state can not become the immediate and direct subject of this same right, and it has no other right, or duty, than to aid and stimulate the initiatives of the parents. That is the natural order." Here we find medievalism chemically pure. It then asks what is the aim of state control and it answers that the design is "to render the school the slave of electoral patronage, of the passions and emotions, and of a compromise with politics, which latter looks to-

wards revolutionary democracy." L'Action Catholique went on to use the thread-bare argument so often resorted to by those who are non-plussed, that compulsory education was the thin edge of the wedge that would open a way for more radical changes. This argument has been used by stand-patters from time immemorial against change and is about as valid to-day as ever. L'Action Catholique has also the habit of prejudicing the case by describing an attendance law as school constraint or school restraint, when it is really for the children a matter of freedom and a safeguard for them at a time when they do not fully realize the value of an education. On another occasion L'Action Catholique said that education was not a duty which the parents owed to the children, but only a matter of charity. One has only to compare these statements with what has been recorded, and will be in these pages, to estimate the depth of their concern with education.

Senator L.-O. David followed shortly with an interview in which he declared he was favourable to compulsory education in the cities. He wished to adopt a middle course between the demands of Abbé Dubois and the opponents ; he was quite ready to admit there were a "hundred reasons why children in the cities should be obliged to attend school up to 14 years, if not more. Their own interest and then the interest of society imperatively

demand it." But as compulsory laws are more or less unpopular, he was prepared to make it optional in the country, especially because of the large families there and the long distances between schools. But most of these and similar objections would be met in any reasonable law such as is desired. He expressed one other objection against it for rural parts, namely, that education tends to take children to the cities when they grow up. But is not this because education in the past has not been adapted to rural needs? A classical education probably does tend that way. But has any one ever tried to think out for Quebec a type of education that would make the boys love the farm, such as is found in several states of the United States, and to a particular degree in Denmark? Some such question might be directed with more than a mere show of justice against the course of study of the Protestant Model Schools and Academies in the rural parts.

An interview bearing the signature of Louvigny de Montigny could not but be an original and bold contribution to the subject and would be read by French Canadians with great interest. M. de Montigny was once a journalist, now he is chief translator in the Senate at Ottawa. Because of his literary reputation, chiefly because of his volume entitled, "*La Langue Française au Canada*," he has been made an officer of the French



Academy and an officer of Public Instruction in France. He, too, advocated compulsory education in the following vigorous terms : "The objection is urged that this reform would be a violation of the rights of parents. Scholastic philosophy establishes a quantity of real rights, of which the too free exercise is happily restrained, even in Quebec, by humane laws. For example, we are taught that animals, having no souls, possess no right. Therefore we can maltreat them at pleasure without losing the least merit. However, our police magistrates condemn to fines or to prison the wretched beings who torture animals, and humanity finds a reason for it, even if the scholastics do not. The right which brings with it no duty is chimerical, except the right of might, the right of the Boche ; but we have seen what the exercise of that freedom leads to. Persuasion ought to produce more effect than coercion, it is said. But that is doubtful. Ignorance, laziness, egotism and heedlessness are vices just as drunkenness. Drunkenness might constitute a right according to the ecclesiastical maxim, "*Bonum vinum laetificat cor hominis*" (Good wine rejoices the heart of man). But the abuse of this right of rejoicing the heart has become a vice as common as ignorance. Heaven knows the heroic crusades led by the apostles and missionaries of temperance, especially since the days of Chiniquy, in our cities and through the



country side. One could imagine no more active campaign of persuasion. Nevertheless prohibitive legislation was judged necessary. The advantages of education are being preached at all times and on all sides, and yet the illiterates of Quebec have never been reduced to a proper proportion."

Senator Belcourt, the doughty champion of the Separate Schools of Ottawa, gave his support to the cause. He told how in 1912 he had said at the Congress of the French Language at Quebec that school boards ought to unite all their efforts to secure a better attendance at school of all children up to 15 years of age. He had not changed his mind, and the recent speech of his colleague, Senator Dandurand, before the Reform Club in Montreal, had further convinced him, that Quebec ought to try out compulsory education, if only to prevent the justification of a regime of national schools.

This reference brings us to the speech of Senator Dandurand before the Reform Club on the last Saturday in December, 1918. He took this opportunity of fulfilling the promise he had made to the Protestant teachers hardly four weeks before, to carry on a campaign among his own people. The cause has had no more faithful or illustrious exponent than Senator Dandurand, nor one who combined such dauntless persistence with knowledge and wisdom. This address was taken at flood

time and did much to lead the cause on to fortune. Spoken at the end of long years of war, it closed an epoch in educational history in Quebec, and heralded with convincing eloquence the dawn of a new era of peace and reconstruction, in which education is sure to play an important part by training up efficient workers and public-spirited citizens who will make democracy safe for the world.

He took as his starting point the fact that education had been greatly improved of late in Quebec by the assistance of the Government, and found the one remaining problem was to bring all the children to school and to keep them there long enough to make them more useful to themselves and to society. He found a practically unanimous answer to the question whether our children attend long enough. They did not. The majority never pursued their studies beyond the fourth year of the Catholic course. The first witness he quoted was M. Magnan, who apparently has himself forgotten what he said in 1912. The words of the Visitors of Schools were quoted, but they are already on record in these pages. The practically unanimous consensus of opinion of the world suggested a compulsory law as the evident remedy for this state of affairs. Such a remedy had been tried in early days by Charlemagne and later on by Louis XIV. in France ; on the latter occasion it was decreed at the request of the Catholic

Bishops. But these early attempts, while admitting the need, were not successful, as the necessary conditions were not fulfilled ; there were not enough schools or teachers. He replied to M. Magnan's statement that 95% of the children were enrolled, that this figure was imaginary, and not based on proper statistics. The fact that 81% of the children in the Catholic schools were in the first three years was quite enough to show M. Magnan's figures were not trustworthy. Then he quoted figures from the report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education for 1911, when a comparison between the general census and the school enrolment showed that 96.15% of the children in all the United States between 7 and 14 years of age, were enrolled while similar figures for 1916 showed 97.6% enrolled. He challenged M. Magnan to say as much of Quebec, where according to his own confession children leave school in large numbers between 10 and 14 years of age. In closing he read to his audience the article by Abbé Dubois, already familiar to our readers.

The use of his words and figures to support a cause which he did not favour was too much for M. Magnan. He rushed into print with a long letter of several thousand words, which appeared simultaneously in *La Presse* in Montreal and *L'Action Catholique* in Quebec. Surely the entry of an official of the Government into a controversial matter that was

certain soon to come before the Catholic Committee and the Legislature, was a serious break with the traditions of the service. If the Protestant officials had been the first to do the same, one can well imagine what might have happened. While the late superintendent was known as an opponent of compulsory education, still he never engaged in controversy; he realized that the tradition of our educational system, since the day that Hon. Boucher de Boucherville made the Council of Instruction supreme, had kept the administration entirely out of politics, and that it was not becoming for him or his officials to be the first to break with the policy which he so highly esteemed. While public officials do not lose their rights as citizens, discretion is the better part of valour for them in touching political issues. No one knows how soon amid the changes of democratic government he may be called upon to administer the very measure he was lately opposing. One may be allowed to express the wonder what any Government could do with an officious servant, who was called upon to carry out a law which he had violently opposed, except give him a pension.

Moreover in his letter M. Magnan made considerable use of figures from the Report of the Superintendent, before that Report was made public, and particularly from his own report as Inspector-General. In di-

vulging the contents of this document before it was presented to Parliament, he was surely guilty of disrespect of our Parliamentary traditions, according to which official documents are considered private until duly presented. Besides, he went through the reports of the Secretary-Treasurers of July, 1917 and got the enrolment figures for the whole school year, and used this information for the purpose of his side of the controversy. It is hardly to be wondered at that he was to get a rough handling when the House opened from the doughty champion from St. Hyacinthe, who does not pick and choose his words for fear they may sting.

M. Magnan's letter opens with a paean of praise to the existing system of voluntary attendance; this part sounds much like the election speech of some politician seeking to show what his party has done. But, alas for flattery, such evidence of past success should only be the earnest of future improvement. The tenth section of his letter on the pretended isolation of Quebec is in much the same dithyrambic strain: "Isolated, yes, the province of Quebec surely is. It is the Catholic and French province in Canada, the only truly French state in the two Americas. In 1760 we only a small people, half-ruined, of 60,000 Canadians, all of French origin, in whose veins ran the pure blood of France. To-day we are three millions, all

French and Catholic and excellent Canadians. How can that miracle have happened? The reply is written in letters of gold from the first to the last page of our parliamentary annals, the respect of the family." And he goes on to show in how many regards Quebec is different from the rest of Canada. What he says is true enough, but it is not the whole truth; he wilfully shuts his eyes to the fact of educational competition. No province can live to itself, without intercourse with the rest of the world. And while other countries have been preparing to keep their children in school, not only until 14, but also during continuation courses up to 16 and 18, Quebec boys and girls may go to school or not, if they can only persuade their parents. But sooner or later, notwithstanding this vaunted isolation, these same boys and girls will have to compete with the rest of the world in the struggle for life. That seems to him of very little importance when put beside a mere theory. The rest of the section is interesting: "Should we be ashamed of this glorious isolation, planned by Providence and prepared by our ancestors, who never reasoned like the modern partisans of compulsory education, urging us to give way before a tactitious clamour under the puerile pretext that such a concession would save our confessional schools? If we give way to-day without need, tomorrow we will have to give



way on another point and five years from today we will be in slavery." Such rhetoric needs no comment; it is enough to reproduce it and let the public realize the effort which is being made to confuse the issue and prejudice the cause, with little or no regard to the needs of the children.

The figures M. Magnan uses are interesting. He still insists on the value of the percent of attendance but carefully ignores the findings of the School Attendance Committee on this point. It sounds very flattering indeed, to be told that the children of the elementary schools make 76.6% of attendance; those in model schools 81.19% and those in academies 85.7%, or about 81% for all the schools of the province. But the important fact remains, which M. Magnan sees fit to ignore, that these percents are for a part of the year only, and that our system of computing them gives us very considerable advantages. And these percents are not so high after all; In Australia certain states regularly make about 90% of attendance because they compute their percents much as we do. The percent of attendance alone as computed in Canada gives absolutely no sure basis of comparison between the different provinces. M. Magnan must know this, but so far he has not had the candour to admit it.

M. Magnan quotes the census figures for the school year 1916-17; there were apparently



544,533 children of school age (5-16) and 463,390 enrolled. This latter figure includes 9,495 over 16; after deducting this we get 453,895 aged 5 to 16 enrolled in the elementary schools; in the Classical Colleges there were 4,147 more under 16. This leaves a margin of 86,491 children of school age out of school—a none too flattering figure. But the basis of this comparison is only imaginary; in 1911 there were 521,040 children aged 5 to 16 as shown by the federal census. Everyone admits the population of this province is growing, yet the school census never caught up with this number till 1916. In 1914-15 the school census showed 502,637 children of these ages; in 1915-16 there were 543,873 and in 1916-17 there were only 660 more than in 1915-16 or 544,533. These figures, if correct, seem to show that the province was standing still, even when the comparison is between similar things, namely, the school census of one year and the next. The whole pretension of M. Magnan on this point that the school census is a trustworthy document is supremely ridiculous.

M. Magnan also deals with the true school age, as he calls it, of 7 to 14, and finds in the school census for 1916-17 that there were 348,323 children of these ages, of whom 330,981, or 95%, were enrolled. He lays great stress on this figure. But why did he not add in those enrolled for the whole school

year as shown in the reports of the Secretary-Treasurers? He might then have shown that 105% were enrolled! A comparison of the federal figures is equally instructive here. In 1911 the federal census shows 328,959 children of these ages. The school census never caught up with these figures till 1916-17. The school census for 1913-14 shows only 315,546 for these ages; what had happened to the others in the meantime? Similar figures for the school census for 1914-15 account for 327,611; in 1915-16 the school census says there were 328,323, or 611 less than the real number in 1911. Only in 1916-17 did the school census for these ages surpass the figures obtained in 1911. In 1916-17 there were 330,981 children of these ages, or only 2,658 more than in the similar census for the year before. To say that the present school census gives us any exact idea of the number of children of school age shows either colossal ignorance or colossal audacity, or perhaps a colossal mixture of both.

How are these figures obtained? There is no school census for Montreal, Quebec, Three Rivers, Sherbrooke, Drummondville and Chicoutimi; and occasionally other places, like Cartierville, omit to take it. Probably 30% of the school children of the province are never counted in any school census, perhaps more. A computation is made; the ratio of census to enrolment for places where

the census is taken is applied to places where no census is taken. M. Magnan urged that this proportion gives a basis accepted in statistics, and even suggested that it gave the cities an advantage, as the number of children is proportionately greater in the country. But he ignored the fact that the school census for the rural parts is not trustworthy. One has only to study the reports of the Inspectors to realize what an insecure basis this is; to use it to make up a figure for the cities is only to aggravate the evil. Many Inspectors frankly admit that the Secretary-Treasurers often copy the school enrolment for the census. Later on in the campaign M. J.-V. Desaulniers, Chairman of the Catholic School Board, West Division, made a special study of this aspect of the question. He was for years the Principal of the Belmont School (Catholic) and has represented the Catholic Teachers on the Catholic Committee. He studied the report of one of the Inspectors whose territory comprises the counties of Jacques Cartier, Vaudreuil, Soulanges and part of Laval. This district was not far from civilization but near Montreal and in a prosperous region. The census is as follows :

5- 7	1,027 boys	1,246 girls
7-14	3,328 "	4,163 "
14-16	222 "	600 "
16-18	15 "	150 "
Total	4,642 boys	6,159 girls

His remarks could not be improved upon: "Here is a census which surprises us. First the sexes in these counties do not appear equally divided, as generally happens. The number of girls is indicated as being 6,159 and the number of boys as 4,642. The surplus of 1517 in favour of the girls is notable. Unfortunately for these counties, just as the years advance, the boys and girls disappear. One finds in all the parishes of the three counties only 15 boys between 16 and 18 years, and 150 girls of the same age. That is inconceivable, yet we are face to face with an official census. The enrolment in these counties is also extraordinary. It is more than 95%; it is almost 100%. Only 8 children are not found on the school rolls. Can that be admitted? The Inspector M. Lefebre shows the lack of sense in the relation of the census to the enrolment when he says (see page 77 of the Report of the Superintendent for 1916-17) that the census was not made from house to house but simply copied from the school register! All the same these statistics remain official figures, and we are not told that the corrections were made. They have contributed to establish the "95.5%" of which M. Magnan boasts. M. Desaulniers' remarks show how futile is the attempt to prove the school census, as at present made, a trustworthy document.

M. Magnan in the course of his letter gave

figures to show the enrolment for the Catholic schools for the whole year, as these figures are found in the reports of the Secretary-Treasurers sent in every July. The reports which the Inspectors send in during the course of the latter half of the school year showed an enrolment of 364,187; these later reports showed 448,217 enrolled, or a difference of 84,025. This increase is accounted for largely, according to M. Magnan by the "flowers of spring," or the young children who begin their school life in April, May and June. But M. Magnan does not seem to be able to see both sides of the question at once; if there are 84,025 children who make an attendance of about two months, they can make no more than 20% of average attendance for the year. If these children had been counted in to get a percent of attendance for the whole year, that percent of attendance would have been considerably lower. One can not have it both ways at once; if the enrolment for the fag end of the year is so much larger, then the percent of attendance is lower. Why did he not work out the percent of attendance for the whole year? And M. Magnan does not seem to see the implications of his own arguments. He has here found 84,025 more children, and he says that if he had searched the reports of the Protestant Secretary-Treasurers he would probably have found 6,000 more, or 90,000 in all. Now if one remembers M. Magnan's

contention that the school census is accurate enough, and that this shows there are only 86,491, he will get a rather startling conclusion. If one was not short-sighted, one would see at once that such an argument, based on these premises, proves that there are about 4,000 more children under 16 years of age enrolled in school than there are children of these ages to be found in the whole province. This argument really proves too much; if one is prepared to handle figures in that way one can prove anything one wishes.

For this "good and strong study, . . . which shows that our compatriots do not need the menace of the whip to make them march in the road of progress," M. Magnan received the congratulations of His Eminence Cardinal Bégin, who suggested that the letter should be printed in pamphlet form and distributed widely. This suggestion was carried out.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HUNDRED NAMES—A COUNTER ATTACK COMPARISON OF LEADERS—JUDGE LAFONTAINE

At this very same time, near the end of January, 1919, a delegation of prominent Catholic citizens in Montreal went to interview His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi in favour of compulsory attendance. This delegation was under the charge of Senator Dandurand, who was accompanied by Senators Beique and Beaubien, M. L.-E. Geoffrion, an ex-president of the Chambre de Commerce, M. J.-V. Desaulniers, Chairman of the School Board, West Division, and M. A.-W. Patenaude, member of the School Board, North Division. The petition they presented was signed by one hundred of the most influential Catholics of Montreal. M. Geoffrion, who got most of the signatures, said the only difficulty was to limit them. Senator Dandurand read the petition to His Grace as well as a letter from Sir Alexander Lacoste, and then he expressed the views of the signatories as to the form which such a law should take. It was intended that fathers of families should be held responsible for giving their children sufficient education, but that the law should contain a formal clause granting freedom of



conscience; in other words, just as in Belgium, there should be compulsory education but not compulsory schools, and parents might acquit themselves of their obligation by having their children instructed in a public school, in a private school or at home. He also read a letter from Lord Shaughnessy who said, "It was very sad to know that so small a percentage of the youth of this province attend after they have reached the age of 11 or 12 years. Their religious instruction, commenced in their early youth, is continued throughout their lives, but it is much to be feared that the primitive secular instruction that they are able to receive during three or four years of their school attendance evaporates with a considerable degree of rapidity when they are idling at home before securing an occupation or when they are compelled to engage in such work as is permitted under the law to children of the tender age of twelve. I know, as you said to-day, that the spiritual advisers of the parents and children are continually urging the importance of a longer and more regular attendance at school, but thus far that advice has not been followed. As I understand it, no constitutional privilege would be invaded and there would be no change in the status of the school organization in the Province if a compulsory law were enacted."

The purpose of the petition was to "pray

that you would ask the Catholic section of the Council of Public Instruction to request the Legislature to pass a law of compulsory education which will only be adding sanction to the moral obligation which the Church lays upon parents to give their children sufficient instruction. The province of Quebec in that will only follow the example of almost the whole of the nations of Europe and of the two Americas, Catholic as well as Protestant." It was presented to Archbishop Bruchesi because he was the senior member of the Catholic Committee from the Montreal district.

The signatures attached to this petition probably comprise the most imposing list of Catholic citizens of Montreal ever attached to any petition. Lord Shaughnessy signed first, next came the signature of Sir Alexander Lacoste, and after that came the name of Senator Dandurand, followed by those of Hon. E.-L. Patenaude, (an ex-minister of the Crown,) Hon. Charles Marcil, M.P., (member of the Administrative Commission of Montreal), Senators Beique, Thibaudeau, Beaubien, Boyer, Casgrain, J. A. Wilson, Hon. Judge Lafontaine, (Dean of the Faculty of Law at Laval University and Chairman of the Catholic School Commission) Judges Fortier, Demers, Archer, Marechal, Loranger, Lebeuf, Dr. Harwood (Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Laval University), Ernest R. Decary

(Chairman of the Administrative Commission of Montreal), M. Victor Morin (President of the St. Jean Baptiste Society), Judges Choquette, Bazin and Cusson, Records Semple and Geoffrion, M. Gaspard Deserres, (City Treasurer), M. Alphonse Verville (M.P., member of the Administrative Commission of Montreal). On this document were the signatures of M. J.-E.-C. Doucet, President of the Chambre de Commerce and those of ten ex-presidents. All the lay members of the four District School Boards had signed, and the majority of the lay members of the Central Commission. Among the ladies who signed were Madame Thibaudeau, who is Patroness of the Notre Dame Hospital, Madame Beique, who is President of the Provincial Domestic Science School, Madame Dandurand, Madame Hamilton, who is General-President of the Assistance Maternelle, Madame Gérin-Lajoie, the President of the Federation Nationale. The petition was signed by men of all shades of opinion, by Conservatives, Liberals and Nationalists. One man signed on his death bed, with the remark that such a work was a fitting close to a life which he hoped had been useful.

In reply His Grace promised to transmit the petition to the February meeting of the Catholic Committee. This petition was presented to Archbishop Bruhcesi the Saturday before the opening of the Quebec Legislature

and was timed so as to produce the greatest possible impression at Quebec.

On the night of January 23rd, Father Hermas Lalande declared in the hall of the Jesuit Church, that the Government of our Province has not the right to pass such a law. He outlined the theory of natural rights, to prove the direct and immediate right of the parent over the education of his child, a right inalienable and not to be shared with the state. To this theory he opposed the conception of such revolutionaries as Rousseau, who in his Social Contract had said that authority in society did not come from God, but that the law as made by the majority constituted a right. This position is as familiar as it is futile. But his own contribution to the debate is worth notice. The amount of education proposed under the act, is more than is necessary for the primal need of society, which is that its members should not be a menace to one another. The argument of public prosperity could never be used to justify compulsory education, because that would rest on the base ground of utility. Again not all the children have any strict right to such an amount of education. A large part of the population could, if necessary, gain a living without any instruction at all. Painful and poorly paid employments have to be filled like all others, and it is not for the state to decide who shall and who shall not

fill them. Not many in these difficult but hopeful days would care publicly to prescribe such a social medicine. We owe something to Father Lalande for exposing the naked framework of his case, which needs only to be confronted by the facts of modern industrial society to bring its own refutation. The contrast becomes clear if we but glance again at Abbé Dubois. This sympathetic teacher sees the needs of the children. He has a vision of the future. His mind overflows the grooves of medieval thought. The latter is prepared to sacrifice the material, social and intellectual needs of childhood on the altar of theory. There is such a thing after all as the will to ignorance.

But Abbé Dubois had not been idle all this time. He sent a copy of the attendance clauses of the Belgian Law to *La Presse* to let people see that it was not such a terrible menace to the sanctity of the home after all, but really gave all the protection required by any parent to see that his child did not go to a school where the teaching was contrary to his religious faith. He reproduced M. Magnan's statement of 1912 when he had deplored the early desertion of our primary schools and asks how it is that M. Magnan granted himself the luxury of holding one view in 1912 and the opposite view in 1919, particularly when the facts had not changed. In 1913 he had said, "It is to be wished that

the duration of attendance at school should be prolonged for a great number of pupils." The reply of Abbé Dubois is, "After getting himself into hot water by having furnished an argument for a law of compulsory education, which would prolong the attendance of children, he recovers himself and interprets his figures in the following manner, as if he said 'Before the Congress of the French Language as before the Congress of School Commissioners I deplored the slow or irregular *promotion* of pupils, but I never pretended that this weakness arose from the non-attendance at school of children between seven and fourteen years of age, now in that case M. Magnan wasted his time in calling together the Congress of School Commissioners, for the latter can do nothing for the promotion of children. Here we have a new interpretation, and M. Magnan has not the honour of having found it himself; he took it from an article published by Abbé Maurice in *La Presse* of December 28th, 1918.'" It is interesting to watch the frantic efforts of M. Magnan to avoid the rapier of Abbé Dubois; whenever he makes a wild parry to save his face, he exposes some other vulnerable part.

We need not follow in detail Abbé Dubois' effective exposure of M. Magnan's inconsistencies. It is more profitable to record his passionate zeal for the welfare of children, and his appreciation of the Protestant position.



This measure, he says, "involves an important question of policy. Though the French Canadians are in a majority in the Province of Quebec, they are however a minority in the Dominion. Now what do small weak countries, or the minorities in a country do to render their position stronger? They make alliances. Can we find allies to defend our system of separate schools against the attacks which threaten us from the federal side? The Protestants of the Province of Quebec are interested like ourselves in conserving our system of religious teaching in the schools (*écoles confessionnelles*), and they are on record before the Legislature for the purpose of obtaining a compulsory attendance law. We should be invincible against the Protestant majority of the other provinces the day we united with the Protestants of Quebec to defend our separate schools. The latter, satisfied with their lot and happy to belong to the only province of Canada that has peace in school matters, would not be in a hurry to put themselves in a precarious position in the midst of Catholics. Their co-religionists would think twice before abolishing a system of schools, with which everybody is satisfied in the Province of Quebec."

Early in February, Hon. Judge E. Lafontaine, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Laval University and Chairman of the Catholic School Commission, gave *La Presse* a most



profound and comprehensive study of the question of compulsory education in the Province of Quebec. To give a synopsis of his argument, we select a few passages. "The question would be simple enough if it had not been needlessly complicated. It is a question of matter of fact, a question of opportuneness or of practical necessity, but some have wished to make of it in certain regards a question of religious dogma, of social philosophy, of natural right and I know not what else, obscuring the question at pleasure and throwing trouble in people's consciences and minds. . . . The opponents of compulsory education, who confound it with compulsory schools, base their arguments on a state of affairs invented to their fancy, with elements taken right and left from all countries, except our own; they reason about an ideal which they imagine after their humour, they are in the realm of the unreal and the false. They imagine: (1) an absolute state, something like a 'Jupiter tonans,' an autocratic reproduction of an ogre, a Roman Caesar, an Emperor of Russia or Germany, a Louis XIV saying, 'L'Etat c'est Moi.' . . . Such a state does not exist here, and no one wishes it to exist under any form whatever, whether autocratic, oligarchic, democratic or theocratic. (2) To come to the question of compulsory education, they represent the state as a teaching state, a state which owns

the schools and pays their expenses, imposing courses of study, etc., in a word master and absolute proprietor, having to give an account to no one. (3) They suppose a tyrannical law, executed tyrannically, bringing in the policeman with whip in hand, brandishing handcuffs, searching houses and filling our gaols. (4) They never fail to see in the schools of this imaginary state the complete absence of religion and morals, that is to say godless and neutral schools. All this is idle fancy and useless trouble, for the actual state of affairs is quite different." "The arguments of this school have nothing new in them, and they can be found for the most part in the records of the Congress of Catholic Jurisconsults held at Lyons in 1885, and in particular in the works of the reporters Father Dumas and Abbé Chère. That would not be a sufficient reason for rejecting them. But they do not apply to our country. A mistake is made in repeating them, since our state of affairs is quite different and a great quarrel of empty words has been made about them. Moreover they are out of date and have been abandoned; at the Congress of the Social Week in France held in Versailles in the summer of 1913, with Mgr. Gibier, Bishop of Versailles as President, who has been justly called the Social Bishop, it could be said without contradiction by Mons. Terrel, a Professor in a Catholic College,

speaking of the responsibility of parents to their children, 'That does not mean, however, that the state itself in this matter (of education) has no rights. It has, because it also has an interest and a responsibility, though one that comes in the second place. It has an interest and a responsibility in forming good citizens, because too large a number of bad citizens would render almost impossible the exercise of its duty of police protection. The interest of the state permits it to supplement the efforts of parents who do not sufficiently fulfil their duty of education, or rather and in a more general manner, to help parents to fulfil it by means of school organization, and to bring pressure to bear on them to urge them to do it better, even by a law that would render a minimum of education compulsory'." . . . "I consider that a law of compulsory education ought to be passed, if only as a matter of condescension towards our English and Protestant fellow-citizens, who desire it, and to put us on the same footing as the other countries and particularly the other provinces of Canada, and also to stop the unjust reproach, so irritating to Catholics who love their religion, that our clergy is opposed to education in order to keep the French Canadians in ignorance and to be better able to dominate them, and that the French Canadians are satisfied to be ignorant, and are

opposed to progress and are a charge on the country."

The most effective comment on this last point we find in some words of Abbé Dubois. Their exalted spirit and clear vision lift the matter above the dust of controversy into the sunlight of true religion.

"With the religious schools which we have, and in face of the absence of such a large body of children who might frequent them, there is here a condition to enflame the zeal of a St. Francis Xavier. I think if that great saint were living in Montreal, he would not wait for the theologians to come to an agreement on the legitimacy of a compulsory law to become an ardent apostle."

## CHAPTER X.

### IN THE LEGISLATURE—SECOND BOUCHARD DEBATE

The Provincial Parliament had hardly opened when the question began to attract attention in the halls of the Legislature. The Trades and Labour Council of Montreal, representing about 35,000 workers, sent a delegation the last week in January to the Premier; the delegates made their usual demand for compulsory education. Another delegation from the Catholic Labour Unions of the Province together with the Catholic Commercial Travellers' Association, met the Prime Minister to protest against a compulsory law. The delegation was introduced by M. Paquet, deputy for Saint Sauveur, Quebec. M. Laferte, deputy for Drummondville and counsel for the Catholic Labour Organizations had been asked to introduce the delegation, but he refused because as a deputy he would be called on to act as judge in the matter. A delegate, M. Beaulé, said that if boys were educated till 16 years of age they would want to go into banks or stores at the end of the time instead of working as labourers, and as banks or stores did not pay much the father would have to continue to help support the son till the boy was of marriageable age. He

did not say who was to support the son after marriage.

The reply of Sir Lomer is interesting as it is the one important public pronouncement of the Prime Minister on this matter since the debate on the Finnie Bill. He thought there was less difference of opinion than appeared on the surface; it was our duty to send as many children as possible to school. But he pointed out the exact position; there was no bill before the house, and the debate was not likely to lead to the presentation of a bill this session. It was necessary to prove that the Quebec attendance was less satisfactory than that in other provinces. "If it is not as perfect as everyone would have it, it is necessary to find some means of making it better." Meantime he deprecated the waste of time in quarrels.

The remarks of Hon. A.-L. Taschereau are very interesting. He intimated that the Government was against passing measures that were not acceptable to, and that did not have the support of, the great majority of the people; at any rate the Government would not act harshly in this matter. "We are opposed to coercion in all matters," remarked the Minister. At the same time he pointed out that there were two million French Canadians in Canada; the majority are in this Province, and because of this isolation are under disadvantages, and if they are to remain what they are

and occupy their true place, education is essential. For twenty years he had the honour of being elected in Montmagny, and each time he had noticed that there were some of his electors who had not been able to read their ballot papers and had to have assistance in casting their vote. He then mentioned his intention to have the law amended regarding the employment of children in factories so as to ensure that they should have some education at least. "It is true," said M. Taschereau, "that at times it is hard for the fathers of large families to send their children to school, but they can leave no finer heritage to their children than an education."

Several petitions were presented to the Assembly against a compulsory law. One was particularly notorious. Some very vigorous words were used with reference to this petition in *Le Monde Ouvrier* of Montreal.

"A petition was presented to the Assembly by the Deputy for Charlevoix-Saguenay. This petition is so ridiculous that it deserves more than a word of exposure. It was signed by more than a hundred names, at the head being the worthy priest for St. Hilarion. On the first page there were about 30 signatures, and half of these men were so illiterate they could not even sign their names but had to make their mark. The cultured priest must have been proud of such cultured and congenial



company. This petition ought to carry great weight and should surely be reproduced in facsimile and hung in every school in the province as an example of ignorant devotion and a proof of the desire of our obscurantists . . . to prevent the light of instruction from reaching the poor habitants. Could there be a more striking example of the burning desire on the part of our false prophets and pharisees for the continuance of the regime of compulsory ignorance? Let us never forget that L'Action Catholique has said that education is not a necessity or a duty which the parent must perform towards his child, but only an act of charity. . . . And are these the electors from which the Deputy for Charlevoix-Saguenay derives his mandate?" Such a quotation is reproduced here to show what rebukes are hurled against the Province of Quebec, all on account of a few reactionaries here who are willing to stop at nothing in order to prevent reforms in education.

But the "*pièce de résistance*" in the Legislature with reference to compulsory education occurred on January 29th, when M. Bouchard made his motion, asking for copies of resolutions. This was a fiery speech, full of burning criticism. There was a full complement of ministers, and a very large attendance of members. He began by speaking of the economic superiority of the educated man, made so manifest in the light of the war that

the legislators in France and England had thought it their duty to give the masses of the people a larger and more solid sum of instruction by an extension of the compulsory law. It was only in Quebec one still heard the claim that compulsory education was ineffective, though all the great people of the world were trying compulsion to secure a better instruction. He said he did not wish to be thought of as attacking the Government or the Council of Public Instruction; both had been deceived by the official statistics, which should be corrected. With many others he admitted he had been deceived by the official figures furnished by M. Magnan in 1912. In driving home this point he gave effective instances, but he made the unfortunate mistake of saddling M. Magnan with the responsibility of computing the statistics. The ensuing personalities obscured the issue of the untrustworthiness of the official statistics, now well established. The admitted inaccuracy of the returns of secretary-treasurers, and the use of estimated figures illustrates the difficulty of the present system; but it does not excuse their use, except with due allowance, as a basis of comparison.

In closing the debate for the Government M. Décarie had to admit that there were deficiencies in the official statistics. He also paid M. Bouchard the deserved compliment of commending his motives in bringing the

question before the House. This came as an effective reply to those who had hoped to discredit the cause in its leader. It was a fitting tribute to the value of the work done by the man who, taking chances dangerous to a political career, stood up to his own leaders in Parliament, and forced them to admit that the statistics on school attendance in the Province of Quebec were not as satisfactory as had been believed.

## CHAPTER XI.

IN THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE—M. PRÉVOST—  
JUDGE MARTINEAU—DR. CHOQUETTE—  
THE POSTMORTEM OF MAGNANISM—  
IN THE PROTESTANT COMMITTEE

The matter of compulsory education came before the Catholic Committee at its meeting of February 5th. Hon. C. Delage presented the petition, of which Archbishop Bruchesi was the bearer, together with the petition from Drummondville, which had been before the Committee for several months, but had never been debated. Two motions were put before the Committee, but both were eventually withdrawn. The first was the proposal of M. J.-E. Prévost, M.P. for Terrebonne, to grant local option to school boards ; the other was that of the Drummondville Board to impose a compulsory law on all towns and cities of more than 1,000 inhabitants. Both were withdrawn, and a resolution, proposed by M. Thomas Chapais, seconded by Judge Tellier, formerly leader of the Opposition, was carried unanimously. This charged the Superintendent to make an inquiry into the accuracy of the school statistics, and the means to be taken, if needed, to make them absolutely authentic. Such an inquiry was considered essential because of

the conflict of opinion, before the Committee should pass finally on the need of compulsion. Up to that time the most influential argument against a compulsory law had been that our attendance was so satisfactory as not to justify compulsion. It was in order to know if the statistics hitherto relied upon were satisfactory, and after that to decide on the opportuneness of such a remedy, that the Catholic Committee adopted this resolution. Such action on the part of the Catholic Committee, in view of the difference of opinion that has existed in the past with reference to the workings of compulsion is much to be commended ; if some unanimity on the matter of the need, as shown by statistics, and on the amount of education our children are receiving as compared with those of neighbouring provinces can once be reached, it seems as if it would not be so difficult now to take the next step. It is interesting to see the matter discussed calmly on its merits with the interest of the children continually uppermost.

During the course of the lengthy debate, Hon. Judge Robidoux, who will be remembered as the father of the Bill of 1897-98, which proposed to create a Ministry of Education in Quebec, and who has been known as a friend of the cause of many years, put the question squarely before the Committee, when he asked the Bishops who were present

to pronounce finally on the debated point whether a law of compulsory education was contrary to the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and as such to be condemned. Archbishop Bruchesi replied : "The Church has announced no doctrine on this point ; there is no bull, nor any papal decree condemning or affecting the question, which remains absolutely free in point of view of doctrine and of Catholic discipline." This was a momentous pronouncement. While ecclesiastics in other countries had approved of it, this was the first time that the question had ever been answered so frankly and definitely by competent ecclesiastical authorities in Quebec. The importance of this answer was properly emphasized by Senator Dandurand in a letter to *La Presse* a few days later. "This threw down in ruins all the scaffolding of quibblings and sophistical distinctions so laboriously built up by Father Lalonde. The question of compulsory education is then absolutely free, both as regards doctrine and as regards Catholic discipline. It was claimed during the course of the debate in the Council (by Mgr. Roy, who was present representing Cardinal Bégin), that if the decision of His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi was quite exact, on the other hand the thought of the Church had been contrary to the principle of compulsory education. But, strange to say, no one arose to say by what organ or by what

voice the Church had expressed its intimate thought, since there had been no bull and no decree of Popes or Councils on the question, and since it was admitted that compulsory education can be discussed in all liberty. When the Church wishes to enlighten the faithful, it knows how to speak to them in no equivocal terms. It does not give direction by signs. An unexpressed thought does not constitute a direction and can not furnish an argument. One is forced to ask where that thought can reside and how it is communicated." Then the Senator quotes the words of Mgr. von Kettler, who did not claim that ecclesiastics were agreed on the matter, but as for himself, he was strongly in favour. The words of Mgr. Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul, U.S.A., were also quoted, and Senator Dandurand said he had reason to believe that all the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States felt the same. He also told of a conversation he had had while in Rome in 1913 with one of the highest authorities at the Vatican. "All the partisans of compulsory education will now breathe perfectly at ease, and the question can be discussed on its merits. The members of the Council of Public Instruction thus understood it when they decided, before pronouncing on the request we presented, to get information on the question of attendance to know if it is satisfactory, and if not, to study the opportuneness of applying



the remedy which we suggest. His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi defined, in precise terms, the problem to be studied, when he wanted to know if the remedy we propose is necessary, and if it is efficacious. The inquest is open."

The discourse of M. Prévost was printed in the papers a few days after. In part he spoke as follows : "This is a burning question and the discussion of it has often produced more heat than light. Why ? First, because certain Radicals have given it their support. As if that were enough to render the project itself bad ! According to that reasoning we would have to oppose the increase of teachers' salaries, a proper qualification for the teaching staff, and the study of hygiene in the schools, just because certain Radicals wanted the same as we do. It is not less true that the adhesion of certain Radicals has made this a burning question. The other reason which has envenomed the discussion is because certain Catholics have condemned compulsory education in the name of the Church." Referring to the categorical statement of Archbishop Bruchesi, M. Prévost remarked : "It seems to me then that I can be in favour of compulsory education without being either a Radical or a heretic." He did not wish to wait for a careful scrutiny of the statistics, or to calculate the exact degree of efficiency of compulsory education, but pressed for local

option. Finally, however, he withdrew his motion in favour of that of M. Chapais.

Following up the action of the Catholic Committee in asking for a scrutiny on the statistics, Hon. Judge Martineau, a member of that Committee, gave an interview to *La Presse* on February 22nd, and suggested a commission for that purpose. He spoke of the two factors in the statistics, the enrolment and the census ; it was the latter that was at fault and not the former. He said, however, that the Quebec enrolment keeps no record of the children who move during the year from school to school, and is considerably inflated thereby. "This inquest, however, would give no satisfaction, pardon my frankness, unless it was conducted without regard to the consequences. If the public had the least suspicion that an attempt was being made to prove that compulsory education was not necessary rather than to establish the truth, pure and simple, one would be quite justified in not giving credence to the figures furnished, just as now doubt is cast on the figures already given. I would therefore humbly suggest that a commission of inquiry should be appointed, consisting of people of education, of a patriotism that is really well-informed and moderate, and representing in equal numbers the two shades of opinion. In no case let the duty of making this inquest be put on the employees of the Government or

of the Department of Public Instruction, who might unconsciously believe themselves in duty bound to inquire into only a part of the facts so as to justify the opinion of some of their chiefs. The sessions of such a commission ought to be open to the public ; closed doors would lend suspicion. Besides what is there to conceal ?” He also suggested that the notable men of each school municipality should help to make the census ; they could find out the number of young people under 25 years who could not read or write satisfactorily. Business and commercial men could help by taking the census of young people in their employ. “If from all these researches it was found that a law of compulsory education would scarcely ameliorate school attendance, I am sure the partisans of this reform would renounce it with good grace, taking account of the fear which is aroused in certain quarters by any interference of the State in education. On the other hand, if it is evident that school attendance and the duration of the enrolment are not sufficient, and they certainly can not be sufficient if the number of our children insufficiently equipped for the struggle of life is at all considerable, then should it not be the duty of the partisans of the status quo to keep silence about their scruples ? This they can easily do, remembering that there can be no evil in being Catholics of the same sort as is the Catholic

hierarchy in America, England, or Belgium. And should it not be their duty to rally to the support of the proposed law, which will be the more effective as it will meet with a more loyal adhesion from the educated classes?"

On February 26th, Dr. Ernest Choquette brought the question up in the Legislative Council on a demand asking for information about the inspection of schools. He spoke with the utmost frankness about provincial self-praise based on false statistics, and declared that the same criticism applied to the school reports. These he declared contained "an ineffable and almost uninterrupted litany of praise" which even the slightest acquaintance with the facts would modify. The official view that only 14 out of 6,055 schools could be classed as less than good, showed the provincial system to be "as great a wonder as the Quebec bridge." He spoke scornfully of this reflection in the Inspectors' Reports of the "hosannas of glorification uttered by their immediate superior." These words contain a serious warning to all educationists. Dr. Choquette puts his hand on one of the failings of education on this continent. We have all been too anxious to produce good reports and too reluctant to face just criticism. We have too often had the backward look and we have flattered ourselves on the long distance we have travelled and have failed to see how far we still are from the example set for all educa-

tionists in the Fisher Act in England. If we are ever to make progress we must learn to submit to criticism, however cruelly it hurts for the time being. We must realize that education implies among several other matters an adaptation to an ever-changing social environment, and that this adaptation must be made, however much it conflicts with old established custom and self-satisfied officialdom. We must never forget that satisfaction with our own work is our besetting sin as educationists.

Dr. Choquette in closing asked his hearers not to imagine he had a grievance against the inspectors ; he was only opposed to the existing system and those who used it to mislead the public mind. "How do you expect them (the inspectors) to throw in a single unfavourable note alongside of the ones of triumph on which the Inspector-General prides himself before the Committee of Public Instruction. . . . The only conclusion I wish to draw from my comments, the only wish I would formulate, which I know moreover conforms to the wish of a considerable number of inspectors, to whom this duplicity is repugnant, is that our country should receive reliable information on the value of the public school, on the nature of the progress made by our children, and on the competency of our teachers, and that no one or nothing should dazzle us on this subject by imaginary

sketches or fantastic certificates of excellence and of perfection. What we wish, in fine, is to maintain this important subject of public instruction in a position where we can examine and study it without opposition from persons, or from the sophisms which they spread abroad. The decision taken by the Council of Public Instruction to have certain affirmations and certain official reports verified by the Government reveals a wise feeling of misgiving. It is necessary for this inquest to comprise the subject which I have just mentioned." Hon. T. Chapais replied to this speech by expressing surprise at the words of Dr. Choquette ; as a member of the Catholic Committee he had been in favour of a revision of school statistics, but this decision was not due to any doubt of the truth of the reports sent in. In reply Dr. Choquette said we had no school statistics worth serving as a basis for forming an opinion ; he had mentioned the singularities of the statistics to show how improper it was to use them as a basis for discussion.

No reply to this debate was forthcoming. Don Quixote forgot on this occasion to vindicate his honour as a true knight-errant and as a defender of lost causes, and even the trusty Sancho Panza preserved a discreet silence on this disagreeable subject, and did not try to defend his master. But Dr. Choquette's speech was not soon forgotten among the friends of reform.



During the session Hon. A.-L. Taschereau, Minister of Public Works and Labour, amended the child labour law ; the former law, passed in 1909 and amended in 1910, applied to industrial establishments only. The new law is to include all child labour and will apply to children who work in offices and stores, as messengers and on delivery waggons. The amendment proposed to ensure that these children, at best, in cities, should have a certain amount of education. The certificate of age and of educational knowledge was to be drawn up by the Deputy Minister of Labour, and would be uniform over all the Province. Children who did not have the required knowledge of reading and writing but were at work might go to night school, and if their attendance was good, might continue at work. This bill was modest in character, and yet it drove several more nails in the coffin of the voluntary attendance theory. It left no loop-hole for that ghost to crawl out, which so often whispers that children leave school because they must work to earn. The Taschereau law provided no exemption ; it enacted that no child, however poor his family, might go to work in cities without some education. And that is the proper view to take ; if education is looked at from the standpoint of the children, it will be seen at once that the matter of poverty among parents should be dealt with



by the State in some other way, and that it should not be an excuse for keeping children from school. The Taschereau law was another inroad on the liberty of the parent ; no parent can, when the law is working effectively, send his child to work unless the child has some education. And by preventing children from working, it knocked the very foundations from under the theory of voluntary attendance ; if the children can not work under 14 years of age, there is no reason why they should not attend school. In what can they be better employed than in attending school ? In his last speech M. Bouchard rubbed in some of these facts with a generous supply of salt. Perhaps it is well for the Government to have taken this step first ; the bill was not opposed, and it ought not to be so difficult to carry the complementary measure and compel children to attend school who will not be allowed to work.

We have already quoted from the first article by M. J.-V. Desaulniers, written in February, on the question of the school census. His second article, following closely on the first, deals with the inconsistencies and contradictions of the individual figures supplied through inspectors. He studied the reports of the 44 Catholic inspectors with particular reference to census and enrolment, and computed the per cent of children who were enrolled out of the total. Forty inspec-

tors did receive census figures and their figures were used in making up the boasted 95% of children enrolled. The percents for the different inspectorates ranged from 63% to 103%; there were three under 70, eleven between 70 and 80, eleven more between 80 and 90, two between 90 and 100, and ten had exactly 100%, and three were over 100%. The ten who reported exactly 100% were particularly interesting ; here were ten whole inspectorates, including about 70,000 children enrolled, where the enrolment figures had been copied down to form the census. The first twenty-seven, being those under 100%, and therefore resting on the basis of some sort of a census, gave an average of 79.7%. M. Desaulniers quoted from the reports of the inspectors, where the inspectors had in several cases tried to relieve themselves of the responsibility of certifying to these figures supplied them by the secretaries. One inspector whose inspectorate showed 75% of the children enrolled, said : "I would like to record here the names of the municipalities where the census is taken regularly and seriously ; they are few in number. Our school commissioners do not attach great importance to this matter ; the object of it escapes their attention. Consequently they are contented with a minimum of census. This is not satisfactory, since it should show the proportion of children of school age who attend school. This number

is not large among the children aged 12 to 16." Now it was from these figures that was derived the famous 95% children enrolled as compared to census. In his report as Inspector-General M. Magnan had said : "In spite of its relative imperfections, the census taken by the secretary-treasurers constitutes none the less a serious document, and it would be rash to invalidate it because it is not irreproachable." After M. Desaulniers had shown up the individual reports from which the total was made up, the document lost some of its serious look.

Early in March M. Magnan came to Montreal and addressed le Cercle Roy, and spoke on Professional Training for Teachers. In this address he said he would put aside the question of statistics as a vain question and would deal with the great school problem of the day, namely, "teacher training." This address called forth in the columns of *Le Canada* a letter that for scorn and invective deserves to be ranked among the masterpieces of satire. The letter was anonymous, but it should not be difficult to guess its author. We quote at length : "Let us note first of all that M. Magnan has frankly put aside the vain question of school statistics. Not so long ago this was not a vain question. When M. Magnan repeated four or five times in the same interview, when he subsequently published in season and out of season, that

95% of our children of school age were going to school ; when speakers and journalists, relying on this information, issued a challenge to the partisans of compulsory education to show a country in the world where the official figures showed a school attendance as brilliant as our own ; when it was proclaimed as a consequence of this that we were the best educated people in the world, then the question of school statistics was not a vain question. But since the Catholic Committee itself in its wisdom asked that some one should use a lantern to throw some light on our marvellous statistics ; since M. Patenaude and M. Desaulniers among others began to analyze the last report of the Superintendent ; since the average attendance of the 44 inspectors of the Province has been shown ; since it has become known that a large number of reports of inspectors contain impossibilities and contradictions ; since it has been known that thirteen rural inspectorates show an enrolment of 100% or more, and that the same inspectorates serve as a basis to calculate the census figures in the cities ; since Inspector Lefebvre said, 'The census is not made from house to house, but they are contented merely to copy the enrolment of the school ;' since Inspector Boily has admitted, 'The secretaries do not attach a great importance to the census but are content with a minimum of census,' (although M. Magnan pretends that the

census made by the secretaries constitutes a serious document, which it would be rash to invalidate); since those who have made the same claims as M. Magnan have been threatened to be covered with ridicule ; since the legend created by the Inspector-General with reference to the 95% of enrolment has collapsed in ruins like a castle of cards ; since for lack of a census the early desertion of our schools is shown by the classification of the children enrolled in the different years of the course, both in the schools controlled by commissioners and in private or independent schools ; since, finally, the inspectors have admitted that they calculate their per cent. of attendance, not on the total yearly enrolment, but on the monthly enrolment up to the date of their visit, thereby concealing the lack of regularity of a large number of pupils enrolled on the register, the question of our statistics has become a vain question, which no longer deserves attention; it is now embarrassing and it would be very nice of us if we would consent to ignore it. Let us bury the hatchet of war and let us speak about other things. That is the desire of M. Magnan. However, as the ridiculous and audacious bragging of M. Magnan has not been completely reduced in the melting pot of our criticism and since there still remains a residuum, we will continue to be interested in statistics. We wish to contribute to the inquest demanded by the

Catholic Committee ; the result of this inquest ought to be ready for the May meeting. Let us speak of professional training, says M. Magnan ; that is the remedy for the wrongs of the hour. M. Magnan would have had great force with his audience if he had developed this theme by itself ; but we are warned in the opening of his address that he will treat his subject as a means of securing a better school attendance. A good school, he says, will do more in this matter than all the penal laws which a legislator can invent. Although professional training is an element of the highest order in retaining children at school, it is not, however, the only means of making them come to school. *Ignoti nulla fit cupiditas*, say the philosophers. One can not love what is not known. The child who leaves school the third year, for example, and who does not come back the next year can not appreciate the professional value of the teacher of the fourth year, since he does not know that teacher. M. Magnan can not say that in Montreal and even in the whole Province the teachers who have charge of the fourth, fifth and sixth years are incompetent ; and yet it is proved that 40% at least of the children of the third year do not come back for the fourth year, that 75% of them do not make their fifth year, and that 88% of them do not make their sixth year. Does M. Magnan wish to attribute to these teachers the early desertion



of our schools? . . . . Was it because the teachers were incompetent in Switzerland, in Belgium, in France, in the United States and elsewhere that compulsory education has been established? Can it be believed that they wished to fill up the deficiency caused by the lack of interest in teaching, and that they wished to compel children, cost what it might, to attend classes that were disagreeable? If our mother the holy Church had believed that the interest alone which there is in religious teaching was sufficient to bring the faithful to mass, would not all the same an obligation have been imposed to attend? We like the truth in statistics, and we detest a braggart."

This letter may well serve as the *oraison funèbre* of Magnanimism.

The Protestant Committee had several times prayed the Government to grant a law of compulsory education, but never yet had this prayer been of the fervent, effectual kind that is the beginning of action. In February, 1919, the Protestant Committee began to put its prayer into action. A few weeks before Mr. Howard Murray, O.B.E., had returned from England after meeting Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, the English Minister of Education. Mr. Murray realized it was useless to talk generalities of educational reform and that the time had come for the Protestant Committee to take an active lead in this matter.



Consequently in the meeting of February 28th he moved, seconded by Prof. Laird :

“(1) That a standing sub-committee of not more than five members be appointed, whose duty it will be to report at the May meeting upon the subject of Compulsory School Attendance, embodying the following points : (a) Shall the Protestant population in the Province of Quebec await the decision of the Roman Catholic side of the Council of Public Instruction upon the subject of Compulsory School Attendance, or (b) Shall the Protestant committee of the Council of Public Instruction present a memorial to the Government praying that legislation be passed bringing about Compulsory School Attendance, applicable only to the schools in the Province under the control of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction.

“(2) That the sub-committee be instructed to confer with the Protestant School Commissioners of the cities of Montreal, Quebec, Sherbrooke, Three Rivers, and any other towns or places they may consider advisable, in order to ascertain the bearing of such legislation upon the schools and children of school age within their districts.

“(3) To report upon the feasibility of enforcing such School Attendance if applicable to Protestant school children only.

“(4) To advise upon the additional teachers required should attendance at school be obligatory up to the age of fifteen, and with Continuation Schools or High Schools being provided up to the age of seventeen.

“(5) The amount of capital expenditure required for additional schools ; the present funded indebtedness of all school municipalities within the Province under the jurisdiction of the Protestant Committee ; the amount of revenue presently being raised by each school municipality, derived from property taxes with the gross amount of the valuation rolls in each case, and the amount of additional income needed to carry out the obligations which may be imposed upon such school municipalities in the event of such proposed legislation being carried out.

“(6) To report upon other points which School Commissioners or Trustees may lay before the sub-committee involving changes required in the event of such legislation.”

It is a matter of regret that Mr. Murray's speech on that occasion is not a public document. M. Prévost, M.P., could print for general reading the speech he made before the Catholic Committee ; why was not Mr. Murray allowed to do the same ? Surely the time has come for less timidity and more candour ; the people have a right to know


what is being thought by the men who administer our Protestant schools. If educational discussion is to be forever censored, the time will soon come when the English-speaking people will lose confidence in the system that permits such a practice. The Provincial Secretary has lately invited the people of Quebec to discuss education ; how can reform come except by an awakened public opinion ? And what are our leaders for except to lead and formulate a sane public opinion ? There is something more to be done for education to-day than to choose text-books, however important that is, or to grant bonuses to deserving schools. And when an active lead does come, why not let the people benefit by it ?

The sub-committee of Mr. Murray's has started out to do a very necessary work in making a survey of the situation. It is essential for some responsible body to consider just what compulsory education involves in increased capital revenue and increased running expenses. With this data at the disposal of the public, it will be known what the possibilities are. And while public opinion to-day demands more education and more nearly equal educational opportunities for all, cost what it may to get it started, it is well to know just what such a policy will cost before a concerted attempt is made to bring this enactment to pass. Mr. Murray's report can

not, however, be finished in detail till the Protestant School Commission of Montreal have taken their census, as a firm basis for the estimate.\*

Meanwhile a situation had been brought to pass in Montreal that enabled Mr. Murray's sub-committee to give Protestant educationists a still more decided lead. It had all along been the hope of the School Attendance Committee to secure a larger organization to carry on its work of agitation, but the project had to be postponed several times. Finally in May, 1919, a meeting was called in the Montreal High School ; at this meeting were present delegates from the Board of Trade, Manufacturers' Association, the Local Council of Women, the Rotary Club, the Trades and Labour Council, and the Great War Veterans, among others. A friend of the cause from the other side was there who urged the English speaking advocates to use all their influence to press on for the reform. Such advice was very useful, for the English-speaking people of the Province have often taken the attitude that as a minority, they are powerless. While the opinion of the English people is practically unanimous on the immediate need of this reform, some such misgiving as this has often served as a brake to retard agitation. But when the help of the

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\* Mr. Murray presented an interim report on Feb. 27, 1920. 

minority was needed to carry the day, then the matter appeared in a different light. As a result of this meeting a Federated Committee on Education was formed. This Committee will practically take over the work of the School Attendance Committee and will probably work along the same lines, which have proved themselves to be fair to all parties, agreeable to the ideals of the friends on the Catholic side, and in conformity with the educational traditions of the province. Mr. W. A. Black, who last year was the President of the Montreal Board of Trade, and was deeply interested in the agitation for increasing the salaries of teachers, consented at the unanimous request of this Committee to act as its president. It is a hopeful sign for the future of education in this province when business men are willing to spend their time and money to carry on an agitation for a much delayed reform. If the wishes of the Committee are carried out, this Montreal Committee will be but the nucleus of a province-wide organization with similar aims and purposes.

Mr. Murray was present at this meeting at which the Federated Committee was launched. He went to the May meeting of the Protestant Committee asking for a free hand for his sub-committee in co-operating with the Federated Committee and similar organizations. If the Protestant Committee

did not give the leadership that was needed, it was evident that it would be sought elsewhere. The advice and assistance of the official educational leaders was particularly useful in guaranteeing to the Federated Committee a policy that in its details would accord with those of the official advisers of the Government. Mr. Murray secured power for his sub-committee to meet with the Federated Committee and to send accredited representatives to advise and assist. This action on the part of the Protestant Committee, while perhaps a new venture, is one that is needed. The Committees of the Council have well-defined duties, to advise the Government on the school needs, to administer certain funds, and to draw up the course of study. The Protestant Committee has seldom if ever associated itself with propagandist activities of a contentious nature for the purpose of securing a change in the law, but there is no reason why it should not. Such activity would provide a needed means of putting educational administration more closely in touch with public opinion. That was one of the professed aims of the Robidoux project of 1898 in planning a Ministry of Education ; the project failed to carry in the Upper House, and it has not been renewed. But any adaptation in the working of the present system so that the Protestant Committee of the Council, which is an appointed



body, could become the means of educating the public opinion on legislative measures that are necessary to keep our schools in a fit condition to compete with those of other provinces, should be readily accepted by moderate reformers whose aim is to improve our educational system, but not to subvert the educational Concordat of Confederation.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT AT OTTAWA— SIR WILFRID LAURIER.

This question of breaking up our provincial systems in the hope of securing an Act of Uniformity in Education was debated at Ottawa during the winter. Dr. Edwards, M.P., for Frontenac, Ontario, brought up the question of national schools in the House of Commons. This debate contributed practically nothing to further the cause of a compulsory law in Quebec, except that by a sort of reflex action it showed Quebec reformers the need of getting together to work out some scheme that would be suitable for all parties and yet be in conformity with the principles of the existing system. It was made evident that there were politicians who were watching from afar the course of events in Quebec and were ready to pounce on our present system, to tear it to pieces on the slightest provocation, or at least to discredit it. It may be that some such persons may read these pages ; if they do, it is to be hoped that they will realize (what their ignorance of the French language may have prevented them from knowing), that as in the past so to-day Quebec can produce men who are capable of formulating and advocating a policy of educational

reform that is progressive, moderate and tolerant. For several months Senator Dandurand and others had emphasized the need of the people of Quebec, agreeing to work for compulsory education for fear opposition would invite just this interference from the Federal side ; while they never once believed that such an attack would succeed, they realized that it would serve its political purpose and do our schools harm in the eyes of the world. It might have been imagined that L'Action Catholique would have seen this too, and have waived its objections ; but no, for the sake of an old-time theory it was ready to shut its eyes to the facts, regardless of how our provincial reputation might suffer thereby. L'Action Catholique was as obdurate as ever ; its mode of thinking was so limited by its regard for the past that it denounced the reformers as being responsible for this Nationalist agitation. This paper has apparently learned nothing, forgotten nothing ; it could not be brought to realize that its own obsolete obstinacy was really largely responsible for this agitation for national schools. The Report of the School Attendance Committee had emphasized the crucial fact that "so long as the provincial education systems are working in conformity with the wishes of the people in the provinces concerned, or are capable of being reformed from within, there can be made out no real case for a change from

our present system of autonomy in education." But a stubborn refusal to accept any reform, however moderate, has always played into the hands of extremists in the long run ; or else we misread history.

In the Senate the question of a national school system was brought up on April 30th by Senator Pope, who said he hoped by such a system to secure a common national ideal in education, and by means of a uniform attendance law for all Canada, to improve the school attendance in Quebec. Most of the information he used to support his case was pirated from the report of the School Attendance Committee, but as is usual in such cases, he did not acknowledge the source of his information. During the subsequent discussion it was thrown in the teeth of Senator Pope that his desire to improve the education of the people of Quebec or to secure an attendance law "had not interested him to the point of his joining in any campaign for improvement, which we have been carrying on in the province." This sarcastic rejoinder aptly enough expresses the general estimate of the spirit that prompted this campaign for national schools. The people who led it had never expressed any particular zeal for school reform or enthusiasm for improving education ; their conversion into educationists was too sudden to be taken seriously. And it was quite evident that this movement did not

have the support of the Protestant educational leaders in Quebec.

The debate did, however, prove of very real help to the local reformers, as it enabled some of the most conspicuous men among the French-Canadian Senators to reiterate before the people of Canada their support of an attendance law. Every French-Canadian Senator who spoke supported the cause. For setting the tone of this discussion Senator Dandurand is to be thanked ; he adjourned the debate after Senator Pope had spoken, and when he re-opened it, he told the story of the campaign in Quebec and "how among the laymen there seems to be a unanimity of opinion in favour of a compulsory act." He warned off all officious interlopers from the federal side, urging that the people of Quebec were capable of managing their own schools and of formulating a progressive policy of their own. "And let me tell my friends of the other provinces that we are wide awake to the necessity of developing our educational system to the utmost, from top to bottom, from the small primary school to the university. We have produced men who in the liberal professions, in the halls of Parliament, and in the courts of Justice have held their own with men of other races; and I think, if honourable gentlemen will take the trouble to look into this question for themselves, they will be satisfied that the province of



Quebec is in most respects the equal of any other province in the Dominion." For the benefit of the people of Quebec he pointed out that they need have no fear of neutral schools following as the result of any attendance law passed by the provincial government. "the fear which is entertained and expressed of neutral schools following in the wake of a Compulsory Attendance Act, is obviously groundless, because neutral schools could be established in the province of Quebec only by the legislature voting in favour of them, and this would mean that it was the will of the majority of the people."

Senators Beaubien, Choquette, David, Poirier and L'Espérance continued the debate; they all pledged themselves to support educational reform in Quebec and a compulsory attendance law. Such a unanimity of opinion among the French-Canadian Senators is a splendid augury of future success. For eliciting this expression of opinion Senator Pope must be thanked; while the result of the debate was not what he had wished for, yet by a reflex action it was perhaps worth while. And the fear of outside criticism and meddling may after all be of some use in strengthening the hands of local leaders and in preventing a deadlock. It may turn out that this fear is the decisive factor in breaking down the opposition of the reactionaries. It is evidently to the interest of every Canadian to see

that all parts of the Dominion, in their own way and in accord with local needs, make educational progress up to the standards required in a modern democracy. No one need feel resentment at the people of other provinces taking an interest in watching our improvements. But the surest way to prevent interference in school affairs from without is for the different provinces to set their own houses in order and to clean up their back yards, before some one complains.

The remarks of Senator L'Espérance are interesting as representing the views of a French Canadian Conservative. He compared Senator Pope's resolution to the resolution proposed three years before by M. Ernest Lapointe, deputy for Kamouraska, who asked the Dominion Parliament to express its disapproval of the educational policy of the Ontario Government with reference to administration and control of the separate schools ; he felt that both resolutions were unjustifiable and mischievous. After speaking of the progress already made in education during the last ten years in Quebec, he said : "But we will not stop there ; we have the will and the means to intensify the movement ; the agitation in favour of compulsory school attendance has the support of the leading men in my province, and very soon, I have no doubt, some legislation to that effect will be incorporated in our provincial statutes. My

compatriots appreciate more fully than they ever did the advantage of a substantial and progressive education in both of the official languages of this country. We will spare no efforts in order that our children may not have to contend with the difficulties that so many of us encountered in the beginning of our career, and even in our later years." Such ringing words can not fail to find an echo in the local legislature.

Several of the speakers during the debate urged Senator Pope to withdraw his motion, and finally he did so, with the intimation that he might on some future occasion re-introduce it.

This debate brought out one pronouncement that was of more than passing interest ; that Sir Wilfrid Laurier before his death had pronounced himself in favour of an attendance law for Quebec. It had for some time been known among the intimate friends of the movement that Sir Wilfrid was deeply interested in the campaign and its clerical leader ; he had sent his secretary to secure copies of the articles that had appeared on the subject in the French press, "particularly the articles of Abbé Dubois." During this debate Senator Dandurand was able to assure the people of Quebec that in the last letter he had received from his chieftain, dated February 6th, Sir Wilfrid had stated his approval of the Senator's reply to Father Lalande, in the

following memorable words : "You are on the right track, and you have struck the proper note. It may be a long chase, but it will come out all right." The letter was in French but the last sentence was in English. This is the letter which we are enabled, by the courtesy of Senator Dandurand, to print in facsimile as a frontispiece.

The adherence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to the side of an attendance law was not properly emphasized at the time; the English papers in condensing the debate omitted all reference to it. But as the news spreads it will have an influence on Sir Wilfrid's many admirers that can never be countered by the rhetoric or logic of the reactionary group. The weight of his beloved name will remove the doubts from the minds of many persons here in his native province who have perhaps been hesitating to declare themselves. When his dying wish for Quebec is better known, it should not be difficult for the Provincial Government to rally its supporters to that wish and bring us speedily to the end of that "right track." It may indeed be a long chase yet, but Sir Wilfrid's help will materially shorten the way. As soon as the people of Quebec appreciate the fact that Sir Wilfrid was not frightened by the sinister bogeys raised by the reactionaries, these bogeys will lose their terror and vanish into nothingness before the bright light of common sense.

His approval of the cause should work wonders in securing a fairer and more open discussion of this vexed subject; and the knowledge that Sir Wilfrid expected and wished Quebec to use the same means as had been found useful elsewhere to improve attendance, will effectively counter the specious show of pride, on the part of some reactionaries, in an educational isolation.

The campaign did not stop there; it is still continuing and plans are being formed for further agitation for the purpose of putting before the public other facts that should be taken into consideration by the committee of the Catholic Committee appointed to investigate the question of statistics. The Federated Committee on Education has hardly begun its active campaign yet. The report of Mr. Murray's committee has not yet been made public. The zeal and careful study which the new Provincial Secretary, Hon. M. L.-A. David has put into his task, as evidenced by his frank but idealistic speeches, shows clearly enough that the discussion of the past two years has been heard even behind the guarded doors of the Cabinet Chamber. While M. David has not given his verdict on the question of an attendance law, he has revived all educational discussion and by inviting the people to discuss the problems of education freely, he has broken the back of the castor theory, which has aimed at keeping

education a sacrosanct subject or a monopoly, to be left entirely alone by the profane crowd. The door is open, there is much to be done, and the labourers are neither few nor reticent. The task has indeed not been finished nor relinquished; but we will take this as our point of departure. We have traced the cause from very modest beginnings during the lean years when it seemed like some Sisyphean task; as soon as it was rolled near the crest of the hill, it was swept back to the very bottom by some unseen hand, until to many in those days it appeared as if the undertaking was doomed to everlasting failure. We have also seen the magic spell broken and the stone rolled over the top of the hill, until now there lies open a practically unhindered path for those who would roll up a mighty movement to show the Government what are the wishes of the people. For the leaders no better talisman can be found than the calm prophecy of Sir Wilfrid, that while it may yet be a long chase, still it will come out all right.

This is not really the last chapter of the story, which will some day be continued and completed by our legislators. Our purpose has been to trace the history of the movement and not to prophesy. Yet if one reads history with more than a superficial glance and with an eye to the underlying movements of thought, one can hardly at times refrain from



comments that infringe on the realm of the prophet. Prophecy is rooted deep down in the great world movements; taking as its premises the principles of the uniformity of human nature and the existence of continuity and law in the realm of human affairs, it attempts to project these world movements into the immediate future. Therefore it may not seem presumptuous to predict that the campaign so well begun will never be allowed to fall fruitless; it must go on until Quebec too has found an effective means of providing an equality of educational opportunity, and of ensuring that it shall not be neglected. It must go on until the blot is finally removed from the fair escutcheon of the province of Quebec of being one of the last remaining places in the civilized world where a careless, a parsimonious or illiterate or even a mentally deficient parent may refuse a modicum of schooling to his children with impunity. Happy the man who is responsible for leading the cause during the final advance until the day comes when over a School Attendance Bill in Quebec the all-important words are pronounced **Le Roy le veult.**



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